The Chinese Betrayal.

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B. N. MULLIK

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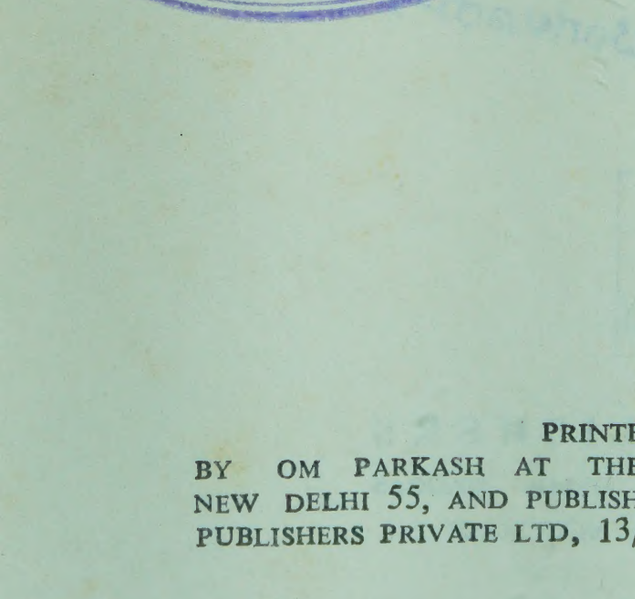

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To the memory of

THE NINE POLICEMEN

who were killed by the Chinese
near Hotsprings in Ladakh
on October 21, 1959,
and who, by their supreme sacrifice,
made the country aware of
the true nature of Communist China

Preface

The encouragement to write this book first came from Sri Y.B. Chavan, then India's Defence Minister.

Sri Chavan was rather concerned at some unjust and uninformed criticisms that were being levelled at the Government's handling of certain security and defence problems during the time Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister. He felt that even those writers, who wanted to be objective, were handicapped because they did not have access to classified material, without which it was difficult to make a proper analysis of security and defence matters, and they had to depend only on published material or on information fed to them by interested persons. The result was that the analysis made by them gave a rather distorted and one-sided picture to the public. The latter had necessarily to go by what came out in print and could not be blamed for arriving at wrong conclusions. But this was ultimately harmful to the country's interest, as such uninformed criticism tended to erode people's confidence in the leadership. Sri Chavan felt that if someone having inside knowledge could put down all the facts in writing, it could then help objective students to come to a balanced judgment. He also felt that as I had been intimately connected with defence and security problems during these years, and there were many facts within my knowledge which were unknown to others, I should put these down in writing, as far as possible, for the benefit of the public, and that all this knowledge should not get buried with me. So, he encouraged me to write down, in the form of a memoir or in any other form I chose, all that was within my knowledge.

I joined the Intelligence Bureau in 1948 and was its Director from 1950 till after Pandit Nehru's death. I think I enjoyed the trust of Pandit Nehru as well as of successive Home Ministers from Sardar Patel to Sri G. L. Nanda. I was naturally associated with many of the important decisions

that had been taken from time to time during this period about security and defence matters. If I did not put down in writing some of the facts within my knowledge, but unknown to others, they might never see the light of the day. So, I accepted Sri Chavan's advice with the hope that the account given by me might clear some of the misconceptions that had grown over the years. The idea was not to justify any particular decision or action taken but to give the reasons and the compulsions which made such decisions look inevitable in the prevailing circumstances and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions.

When I accepted this work of love, I did not realise the difficulties I would encounter in carrying it out. A Director of the Intelligence Bureau in course of his work comes to know a great deal and many secrets are entrusted to him in absolute confidence. These he can never disclose. Yet some of these might have had an important bearing on the things that happened. Hence, in writing this narrative I often had to decide how much I should disclose and what I must hold back. Whenever a doubt has crossed my mind, I have played for caution. So, I am conscious that many gaps will still be found in this narrative which I am in no position to fill up.

A Director of the Intelligence Bureau does not carry any papers with him when he quits his office. Hence, it had been a difficult task to reconstruct this story lasting over a long period of sixteen years. I did not like to embarrass my friends in the IB by consulting them or seeking any information from them. Hence, I have written this book almost entirely from my memory. I had maintained engagement and movement diaries throughout the whole period and these have helped me to fix the dates of various events, meetings, talks, etc. Also I used to write down points for discussion in my note-books when going to attend a meeting and jot down the decisions taken at the meeting. Some of these books had remained with me. These have helped me to build up this narrative with some amount of confidence. I have also used some published documents, such as *White Papers* published by the Government of India, debates in Parliament, reports of the Ministries filed in Parliament and material

published in books, newspapers and periodicals. These have also helped to refresh my own memory. Where I have used any material from other books, I have acknowledged them at the proper places. I have tried to ensure accuracy as far as possible, but I am conscious that some inaccuracies might have inadvertently crept in. For these I crave the indulgence of the readers.

I am grateful to Maj.-Gen. D.K. Palit (retired), who was the Director of Military Operations at the Army Headquarters from 1961 to 1963, for having carefully gone through chapters 20 to 26 which deal with the events that happened in 1962, and the subsequent developments. I also thank Sri K. Subramanyam, Director of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, for going through the manuscript and for scrutinising the last four chapters of this book and giving several valuable suggestions which have been incorporated therein.

I have naturally interpreted the events as seen or experienced and comprehended by me. This may give an impression that I have given undue prominence to myself or to the Intelligence Bureau; but this was not the intention. As the book contains an account of the events as seen from my end, naturally the Intelligence Bureau figures prominently in it. But there was no other way in which I could write it. I acknowledge that, seen from another angle, some of the facts and the events may probably be interpreted differently. The purpose of this book is to provide material for such examination. If it serves that purpose then I shall consider that I have not laboured in vain.

In this book where I have ascribed an opinion to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru or to some other Minister, I have reported it correctly. Where I have given my own interpretation or opinion, that is entirely mine and should not in any way be considered to be representing the opinion of either Pandit Nehru or of other members of his Cabinet or the present Government. For these opinions and interpretations the responsibility is entirely mine.

B. N. MULLIK

New Delhi
February 15, 1971

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A Short History of Tibet by H. E, Richardson,
The People of Tibet by Charles Bell,
Tibet – Land of Snows by Guiseppe Tucci,
My Land and My People by the fourteenth Dalai Lama.

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असंख्याः परदोषज्ञा गुणज्ञा अपि केचन।
स्वयमेव स्वदोषज्ञा विद्यन्ते यदि पंचषा : ।।

Many are those who see others' faults;
There are some who see their virtues as well,
Of those who can see their own faults,
Alas ! their number is very small.

II

Independent Tibet

I The Roof of the World

TIBET WAS A COUNTRY with an area of about 5,00,000 sq. miles and a population of roughly three millions when the Chinese "liberated" it in 1950. The Tibetans called their homeland "a lofty country, a pure land, the centre of high snow mountains and the source of great rivers". Indeed, it is a lofty country aptly described in books of geography as "the roof of the world", and some of the upland plateaux are between fourteen to eighteen thousand feet high and even the valleys range in height between ten to fourteen thousand feet. It is only in the eastern side that this plateau gradually slopes down to six thousand feet and then falls into the plains of China. It is ringed on all sides excepting the east by high snow-covered mountains; in the north by the Kuen Lun and Tang La ranges; on the western side by the Ladakh mountains; and in the south by the fifteen hundred miles long stretch of the mighty Himalayas. It is also the source of some of the greatest rivers of the world; the Indus, the Sutlej, the Kosi, the Karnali and the Brahmaputra, all of which pass through India; three other rivers, the Salween, the Mekong and the Yangtse flow into Burma, Indo-China and southern China respectively; and the Huang Ho (Yellow River) which has its origin in Inner Tibet and flows into Central China.

The approach to Tibet from the north, west and south is difficult because of the high mountains but is comparatively easier from the east because of the gradual fall in the elevation. The approach from the side of India and Nepal is very difficult because of the massive mountain ranges and there is hardly a pass which is below fourteen thousand feet and many of them are eighteen to nineteen thousand feet in height. They remain snow-covered for six to eight months in the year. However, from the Tibetan side the approach to India is easier, because from a plateau of eleven to

fourteen thousand feet the passes are at a height of only five or six thousand feet and thereafter there is a continuous descent into India.

Tibet had been divided into several large vaguely-defined areas whose outlines reflected the course of political events. At the western end lay the province of Ngari with three divisions which adjoined Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and the north-west part of Uttar Pradesh. The main centre of administration of this area was Gartok. This also included Guge, an ancient independent kingdom subject to Tibet, which was finally incorporated in Tibet in the seventeenth century. In Ngari are located the holy Kailash and the great Mansarovar Lake, to which converged pilgrims of three religions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Bon. Mansarovar is the source of three great rivers: the Indus, the Sutlej and the Brahmaputra. To the east of Ngari is the Tsang province with the divisions of Sakya, Shighatse and Gyantse with towns of these names as the headquarters of these divisions. This borders Nepal and Sikkim. At the centre of the area is the U province or the middle division with Lhasa as the capital. This area borders Bhutan and NEFA in the south. Eastward on the Chinese border lies Kham, where the other three great rivers, the Salween, the Mekong and the Yangtse, have their sources. North-east of Kham is Amdo, where the river Huang Ho rises and goes on to Central China. North-west of Amdo is the great Koko Nor lake and in the north the Changthang area or the northern plateau which is inhabited entirely by nomadic tribes.

Ethnologically the Tibetans have been recognised to be completely different from the Chinese. The language of the Tibetans is said to be Tibeto-Burman, the alphabet deriving from Sanskrit with a script akin to Pāli. It has no similarity with Chinese and does not use any ideograms. The Tibetans are generally farmers and herdsmen, and many of them are skilful traders. Eight to ten per cent of the population consists of monks. There are only three towns worth mentioning—Lhasa, Shighatse and Gyantse, each with a population of 50,000, 12,000 and 8,000 respectively. There was no wheeled traffic and travel was by horse and pack animals over rough and narrow tracks.

The climate is dry and very cold in the uplands, but not so cold and dry in the valleys. In the uplands, only grass grows; hence this is the great pasture-land of Tibet. In the river valleys various grains like barley, wheat and peas and at some places even rice are grown. There are several species of trees: walnut, apricot, apple, yielding a variety of fruits.

The people were generally sturdy. Their standard of living was good compared to most other Asian countries, including China and India. Exports and imports were evenly balanced. Tibet is considered to have an abundance of mineral resources, but these had not been surveyed till recently. It had been held by all visitors even from the earliest times that the people in the valley were kind, gentle, cheerful, humorous, intelligent and self-reliant and they enjoyed leisure. A high position was given to women. The relations between nobles and servants were good, and serfdom as such did not exist. The herdsmen were very hardy but shy and less intelligent. The Amdoas and the Khampas in the north and east were brave and rugged fighters. The Tibetans were generally fond of animals, whom they treated well.

A characteristic trait of the Tibetan was that every man, woman and child was devoted to religion and, indeed, religion was the axis round which their whole life revolved. The earliest religion of Tibet was Bon, a kind of Shamanism which was considerably influenced by the Saivism followed in Kashmir. There was another folk religion which governed the relations between the human and the demonic world. When Buddhism came to Tibet, it did not destroy these two older religions, but absorbed them, and many of the rituals followed by these two religions are still practised in Tibetan Buddhism, though they are not found in the Buddhism followed elsewhere. The present religion, as explained by the Dalai Lama in his book *My Land and My People*, follows all the three paths of Hinayāna, Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna. For moral guidance the Hinayāna principles are followed; for more esoteric practices of every degree of profundity, the methods of Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna schools are followed; and in all these some of the old practices of the Bon and the folk religion are also absorbed, because people's beliefs in ancient religious rites die very hard. The Buddhism

followed in Tibet is the late Buddhism of India set against a background of beliefs it has not annihilated but lived with in perfect accord. It is wrong to take Tibetan Buddhism as separate from the Buddhism preached in India by giving it the name Lamaism, which many western writers do. It is true that Tibetan Buddhism developed separately from the later school of Indian Buddhism, but it remained strictly based on the teachings of Lord Buddha. It did not suffer alterations or additions at the hands of Tibetan Lamas. Their commentaries remained distinct and they authenticated their work by constant reference to the main teachings of Lord Buddha and the Indian pandits.

That religion had a very important place in Tibet was evidenced by the numerous monasteries all over the country, some of which like Sera, Drepung, Ganden, Tashilhunpo and Derge were very large and had more than five thousand monks in each. Almost every Tibetan family was proud to contribute one member to the religious order. From A.D. 1762 the Church took over the temporal powers and since then the Church and the State became interchangeable and politics were subordinated to religion.

Tibetan culture was based on religion and even handicrafts were replete with religious motifs. There was little secular publication and all the printed books expounded or developed philosophical ideas based on Buddhism. The Chinese influence was noticeable in food and dress habits and in arts and crafts, whereas the Indian influence was deep in religious and moral ideas and literary models. But in spite of the import of ideas from China and India, Tibet continued to remain essentially Tibetan and even the arts, designs and decorations imported from outside were adapted to local conditions and so continued to remain strikingly original.

The people were fairly literate in the valleys. All the monks were educated and so were the noblemen's children. Education was simple and suited to the needs of life. Memorising of religious texts was a compulsory part of the education. Naturally Tibet did not have any big universities teaching higher mathematics or science, though astrology was well-developed. Only the monks had higher education but this was all in religious texts and philosophy.

The power of the Church was not questioned by the people.

Indeed, this was unthinkable. All land belonged to the State and was settled with the nobles who in return had to provide supplies to the State and also members of their families for honorary service as officials. Men who worked on these lands were given small pieces which they cultivated as their own hereditarily and in lieu had to provide certain services to the landlords also in a hereditary fashion. There was no great disparity of wealth between a nobleman and a worker compared to that which existed even in the border countries. The relationship between the nobles and the tenants was good. Because labour was scarce the labourer had usually the upper hand. The economy of Tibet was not based on money but on exchange of goods.

The law consisted of sixteen general moral principles and thirteen rules of procedure and punishment which had come down from the previous several centuries. Mutilation was practised as a form of punishment for repeated crime but was abolished by the thirteenth Dalai Lama except for treason. Actually it was the Chinese who resorted to these tortures in the eighteenth century in order to "restore order" in Tibet.

The army was ten to twelve thousand strong, mostly located on the eastern border, with about fifteen hundred in Lhasa to do police duties as there was no separate police force. The army was trained on the British model and had rifles, machine guns and old-fashioned field guns. Officers were drawn from the noblemen's families and were without much experience. However, the warrant officers, who rose by promotion from ranks, formed the backbone of the army. In place of the police, there was a courier system of long standing which was responsible for tracking the offenders.

There was a two-tier government with the Dalai Lama as the head both of the State and the Church. During the period intervening the death of the Dalai Lama and the finding of his successor and during the minority of the successor, a High Lama would be appointed the Regent and he more or less acted as the head of the State and the Church.

Under the Head of State there was a Chief Minister who was a senior lay official and below him was the Council of Ministers or the Kashag, consisting of three lay nobles and a high-ranking

monk, and this acted as the principal advisory body below the Head of State. The Kashag, whose members were called Shappe' or Kalon functioned jointly in all matters. The Kashag also formed a High Court. The Kashag had no executive authority and all recommendations from the Kashag on both administrative and judicial matters went to the Dalai Lama through the Chief Minister for final orders.

Below the Kashag came the Tsipon consisting of four lay officials whose duty was to maintain revenue records, assess and assign revenue, train lay officials and preside over the National Assembly. But there were other departments of the Government like the Foreign Bureau, the Head of the Army and the Governors of the regions who held positions higher than those of the Tsipon. Below the Tsipon came a large cadre of officials, both monk and lay. Generally the subordinate officials and clerks were laymen.

The State was divided into one hundred districts each under two district officers called Dzongpons, one lay and the other monk. The districts were under the nominal supervision of the regional Governors but were directly responsible to the Council (Kashag) and so had wide powers with independent jurisdiction.

For ecclesiastical matters, the Dalai Lama or the Regent as the head of the Church had his Lord Chamberlain who was a High Lama and functioned as a minister for Church affairs. He ranked below the Chief Minister. Under him there was a Monastic Council of four monks. It was supposed to be lower in rank to the Kashag and was comparable to the Tsipon. The Monastic Council supervised the working of all the monasteries except the three great monasteries—Sera, Drepung and Ganden. Members of this Monastic Council also presided over the National Assembly. The Monastic Council was responsible for the selection, training and discipline of the monk civil service. The monk officials were responsible jointly with the lay officials for their work and were answerable to the Kashag; yet the Kashag had no disciplinary control over them and this was exercised by the Monastic Council. Under the Monastic Council was the monastic treasurer not responsible to the Council but directly to the Lord Chamberlain. In each monastic treasury there were three monks and one lay official-

in-charge as a counterpart of the civil administration treasuries which were in the charge of three laymen and one monk.

Monk officials were recruited both directly from noble families and also from ordinary families whose sons secured higher positions through hard and meritorious work. By this admixture of lay with monk officials Tibet drew for its administration qualified and efficient people both from the noble families who had the influence, education, tradition and experience and sons of poor families who through the Church rose by dint of sheer merit.

The National Assembly, which was the ultimate forum for the expression of the people's opinion, was not a permanent body but was only summoned by the Council to give opinion on specific matters of topical interest. The views expressed by the National Assembly on subjects referred to it were reported to the Council, which submitted them to the Regent or the Dalai Lama. The meetings of the Assembly were attended by a selection of high officials but no members of the Council. The Abbots of the great monasteries represented the Church point of view. There were two types of assemblies, one for normal purposes and the other called in times of great crisis. The full assembly when summoned represented every class of Tibetan society. This full assembly appointed the Regent on the demise of a Dalai Lama. The National Assembly was really the great pillar of Tibetan independence in political matters and conservatism in religious and social matters.

Thus an elaborate balance between the monk and the lay officials was maintained. At almost every level of the administration, there was a mixture of lay and monk officials who exercised joint responsibility. At every level there was a check and counter-check and this on the whole produced an efficient administration which was liked by the people. The Dalai Lama was the highest dignitary of the Church and invariably had his origin in a poor family. The Regent was also a High Lama. The highest posts below the Dalai Lama or the Regent were held by lay officials belonging to noble families, but there was infiltration by monk officials in every department and the voice of the Abbots in the National Assembly carried great weight. The absolute authority of the Dalai Lama gave influence to the Church, but the nobles were not figureheads. They

were the traditional support of the Church and were persons of substance and inherent influence and often produced men of character and leadership.

The Tibetan people were very particular about the proper observance of customs. Though there were no newspapers through which grievances could be ventilated, yet criticism of a measure or an official or any other matter was effectively disseminated through songs which women sang openly and even in the face of the delinquent. Posters were also frequently used and they were often displayed in many prominent places. Thus public opinion was not muted as usually happened under an authoritarian regime and the highest in the land came to know what was currently passing in the people's minds.

The Tibetan form of government was not a dictatorship; it was more a form of benevolent monarchy, though in this case the monarch was considered a reincarnation of the Buddha. He was the highest religious functionary in the land, but he could not be dictatorial in that matter also, because any dictum which he passed on religious matters had to be accepted by the monasteries, particularly by the three great monasteries of Tibet, and they had to pass through a process of much criticism and explanation. Similarly in the field of civil administration, though the final orders were passed by the Dalai Lama as the head of the government, yet they were passed on the recommendations made by very experienced officials with life-long service in the traditions of Tibet. There was no question of any autocratic action by the Dalai Lama. Indeed, history has shown that when a king or a Dalai Lama in Tibet tried to be dictatorial and did not function in the people's interest, he was quickly disposed of. In matters of great public interest the National Assembly had an effective voice and this was fully respected, and no Dalai Lama or Regent could think of violating the expressed views of the Assembly.

The Tibetans were entirely content with their long-established way of life and the rigourless social inequalities between the landlord and the tenant. Tibetan life centred round religion and the Tibetans valued the right to progress in their own way and in full conformity with their religion and were determined to resist any changes imposed on them by outside agencies.

2 Political Background

TIBET'S HISTORY goes back to over two thousand years when Tibetan nomadic tribes were harassing the borders of north-west China. These tribes had their separate chiefs and the first attempted evolution of these tribes as a single Tibetan nation was achieved in 127 B.C. by king Nya-Tri-Tsenpo or Namtrhi, and he claimed to be the first king of a united Tibet. He was succeeded by forty generations of kings. The original religion of Tibet was Bon. It was at the time of the twenty-eighth king, Lha-Tho-Ri-Nyen-Tsen, that Buddhism first entered Tibet; but the consolidation of Tibet as a great nation and also the introduction of Buddhism as the State religion was done by the thirty-third king, Song-Tsen-Gampo (born in A.D. 629), who took his conquests far beyond the confines of the present area known as either Inner or Outer Tibet. He was the contemporary of the Chinese Emperor T'ai-Tsung, the founder of the T'ang dynasty. He demanded and married a Chinese princess and, to preserve political balance, also married a Nepalese princess, and it is believed that under their influence he brought two images of Lord Buddha and established them in the famous Jokhang temple which was built during his time and where they still exist. He sent a young minister to India for study and on his return the present Tibetan alphabet was introduced. Besides his conquests, introduction of Buddhism and the alphabet, this king also framed the ten rules of religious service and sixteen rules for public conduct. During his reign, skills in several trades were acquired from India, China and Nepal and these contributed to the improvement of the country's economy. Indeed, king Song-Tsen-Gampo is held in such high regard that his name has come down to the present generation as the incarnation of Chenresi (Avalokiteshwar), the merciful deity who protects Tibet. Song-Tsen-Gampo died in A.D. 650

but his successors carried their conquests deep into Chinese territory and extended their patronage of Buddhism further. During this period, Tibet conquered Chinese Turkistan and occupied Kashgarh and Khotan and in the west the whole of Ladakh and even Hunza and Swat. In the south, Tibet conquered Nepal and Sikkim and Tibetan armies even occupied some portions of North Bengal. Tibetan armies also penetrated the Chinese frontiers several times. At the time of the thirty-sixth king, Tri-Dhi-Tsuk-Ten, there was continued war between China and Tibet when Tibet conquered several Chinese provinces. To this day, a stone pillar stands in front of the Potala, commemorating these victories.

The greatest spread of Tibetan power and of Buddhism took place in the time of the thirty-seventh king, Thi-Song-Deu-Tsen, who came to the throne in A.D. 755. His armies conquered the whole of Kansu and the greater part of Szechwan and Yunan provinces of China and even succeeded in capturing the Chinese capital Ch'ang-an or Sian and putting a new emperor on the throne who, however, reigned for a short time only. He invited many Indian Buddhist pandits and Sanskrit scholars and among them was the great Padmasambhava who came from Swat. Buddhism in Tibet had come from both Chinese and Indian sources and both the schools were contending for mastery over the country. It was at the time of this king that a great debate took place in A.D. 792 between the Indian school led by Padmasambhava and the Chinese school which resulted in the triumph of the Indian doctrine and the banishment for ever of the Chinese school from Tibet. Thereafter the Indian school remained supreme and was enriched by the influx of new ideas over the centuries. Padmasambhava (Panchen) established the first monastery at Samye and ordained seven monks. To this day this great figure, Padmasambhava or Panchen, is known as the Guru Rimpoche of Tibet. Other scholars who helped the spread of Indian thought at this time were Santarakshita and Kamalashila.

After Thi-Song-Deu-Tsen, his good work was continued by Repachen and in his time Buddhism made the greatest advance in Tibet. He also concluded a treaty with China. But after him

the downfall began. In A.D. 838, he was succeeded by his brother Lang Darma who persecuted the Buddhists and reinstated the old Bon religion. He was eventually killed by a Buddhist monk to free him from his sins; but after his death the collapse of the Tibetan empire took place. Rival chieftains raised their heads and set up two young children as claimants to the throne. The Tibetan kingdom broke into a number of independent princedoms which abandoned the Buddhist faith. Various nobles fighting amongst themselves spent all their energies in their internecine quarrels. Khotan, Kashgarh, Hunza and Swat were lost by the Tibetan Army. Nepal rebelled and expelled the Tibetans. The Chinese pushed back the Tibetans from the territory which the latter had conquered. The work of unification which had started in 127 B.C. and had been consolidated by the great king Song-Tsen-Gampo and extended further by some of his immediate successors was completely undone and Tibet fell apart into various principalities. The Tibetans withdrew from the Central Asian and South Himalayan empire into their high plateau bounded by the Kuen Lun, the Ladakh and the Himalayan ranges, never again to assert their authority outside these limits.

The T'ang dynasty in China, which had grown up together with the Tibetan kingdom, had also entered into a decline more or less simultaneously but outlived the Tibetan kingship by about a generation, and during this period China recovered almost all the Chinese territory which the Tibetans had occupied. Then the T'ang dynasty collapsed in A.D. 905 and there was no central government left in China powerful enough to maintain control over the border provinces. So Tibet and China drew apart leaving a large no-man's-land between them which each claimed later when it was strong and from which it withdrew when it was weak. There is no doubt that during the period of these religious kings, Tibet and China were two powers on an equal footing. In fact, the Tibetans were generally the aggressors and had the upper hand.

The next three hundred years represent the dark period of Tibetan history. There was no central authority and independent

kingdoms rose and fell in different areas. During this period, deprived of any support from the rulers, out-rivalled by the revived Bon religion and denied the frequent intercourse with monks and missionaries from India, Nepal and China, Tibetan Buddhism gradually degenerated and survived merely as magic. But though Buddhism was muted by Lang Darma, it was not entirely destroyed and soon after his death some monks revived the faith in the Kham area. The most important figure during this period was Geraspel whose disciples branched out into Kham and Central Tibet. In the tenth century, a king of western Tibet, who ruled over a portion of Nepal also, embraced Buddhism and so the religion started flourishing again with renewed vigour.

The second introduction of Buddhism in Tibet was the work of two great scholars—one a Tibetan named Rinchen Sangpo (958-1055) and the other Atisa, a Bengali from the monastery of Nālandā (982-1054). The former went to Kashmir and returned full of knowledge and loaded with manuscripts; the latter had been invited by the king and brought great dialectical experience acquired in the Buddhist University of Nālandā and also efficiency in Tāntric liturgy. It is the Tāntric form of Buddhism preached by these two great scholars which flourishes to this day in Tibet and not the original Buddhism of Padmasambhava, though the latter is regarded as the great Guru and his portrait always appears next to that of Lord Buddha himself in any Tibetan monastery. It is from this time that the founding of the great Buddhist monasteries began. When great ascetics retired to particular places to attain the truth, new schools of thought grew round them though all of them were based on the truth preached by Lord Buddha. They did not in any way alter the great truths but, depending on the line they had followed in attaining salvation, taught new methods of Yoga, exercises and rituals and gave their own commentaries. Thus several creeds like Sakyapa, Drigungpa, Phagmotrupa, Karmapa, etc. grew up named after the teacher who preached that particular faith. As is normal in the history of all religions, though these monasteries commanded great influence in the areas in which they

were located, rivalries grew amongst them and there were often bitter feuds between the lay supporters of these monasteries.

However, politically Tibet remained in this disunited state till the thirteenth century when the Mongol conqueror, Chengis Khan, in his long sweep of conquests of Northern Asia and Eastern Europe threatened to envelop Tibet also. During their raids, the Mongols realised that the authorities with whom they had to deal were the monasteries and the latter in their turn sought protection of one or the other of the Mongol princes. Ultimately Kublai Khan, head of the Mongols, favoured the Sakyapas and thereafter the Sakyapas emerged victorious in this century-old rivalry between the monasteries. The Mongols ultimately conquered China also and so became the common masters of Tibet and China bringing, in the technical sense, the first union between these two otherwise completely independent countries under a foreign ruler. During Kublai Khan's time, Phakpa, grandson of Sakya Pandit, visited Mongolia and presented himself at Kublai's court. Kublai Khan was so impressed by his personality and teachings that he himself became converted to Tāntrism and Phakpa, therefore, became the imperial religious teacher and contributed to the growth of Buddhism in the Yuan court. Kublai Khan gave Phakpa authority over all of Tibet and made him the Viceregent for that country with the title of Tishih or Tisri. It is thus that the ruler of Tibet became a subordinate to the Mongol (and not Chinese) Emperor who was then ruling over China, and it is this overlordship which China subsequently claimed over Tibet. For the next one hundred years the country was ruled by a succession of twenty Sakyapa Lamas. Ultimately the Sakyapas were overthrown by the Phagmotrupas. The founder of this power was Changchub Gyaltsen (1302-1370). At this time the Yuan dynasty had weakened in China and Changchub Gyaltsen revived Tibetan nationalism. Gyaltsen abolished the office of Tisri, and all that the enfeebled Yuan court could do was to grant the post-facto title to him. This revival of Tibetan nationalism occurred a little before the revival of Chinese nationalism which took place in A.D. 1338 when the Chinese overthrew the alien Mongol ruler, Gusri

Khan, to establish the Ming Dynasty. Changchub Gyaltsen evicted the Mongols from Tibet and by 1350 he established himself as the actual master of all Tibet, deliberately fostering a feeling of national unity and reviving the traditions and glories of the early religious kings.

But the Tibetan connection with the Mongols did not cease. Even after the expulsion of the Mongols from China, the Tibetans continued their association with them and their deep religious ties. The establishment of a new dynasty in China meant nothing to Tibet and there was no political relationship thereafter with the Chinese Emperor. As Richardson in his *Short History of Tibet* says, "There is no substance in the claim of the Chinese that Tibet was in unbroken subordination to China from the time of the Yuan Dynasty. The link between Peking and Lhasa came into being only through the conquest of China by a foreign ruler who had earlier been accepted by the Tibetans as their overlord. Even before their expulsion from China, the later Mongol Emperors enjoyed no more than purely formal and personal relations with Tibet; and although the Chinese recovered their own Chinese territory from the erstwhile foreign conqueror, they did not take possession of the Mongol territory; nor did they exercise or attempt to exercise any authority in Tibet. Thus Tibet and China, which had both gone under the Mongols, recovered their independence of the Mongols in their own way at different times, Tibet preceding China."

There were, however, frequent visits by Tibetan monks to China both on invitation by the Chinese Emperor and also on their own. These visits were all for religious purposes, i.e. for spreading the faith in China. But strangely the Chinese in their own way called them missions of submission, which could not be true because at that time Tibet was not being ruled by the Lamas but by lay princes. It is the same claim which the Chinese made when the Chinese Emperor addressed the King of England as a devout supplicant and asked him to obey the imperial instructions. Even the Pope was considered to be a subordinate to the Ming Dynasty. No doubt, the

Chinese Emperor sent an honorific seal in 1488 to the Phagmotru King, but by that time that dynasty had lost its power to the Ringpung family and the latter did not have any dealings with the Chinese.

Each of the lay princes who ruled Tibet had to depend on the support of one or the other of the great monasteries. Changchub Gyaltsen and his leading successors relied on the Kargyupa sect. The Ringpung princes who succeeded them had the backing of the Karmapa sect. Both of them were called the Red-hat sects. At this time a great religious teacher, Tsongkhapa (1346-1417), appeared in Tibet and was the founder of a new sect, the Gelupa —popularly called the Yellow-hat. Tsongkhapa was a monk of great eminence and proselytising ability and, following the teachings of Atisa, he set about with great vigour to reform the monastic discipline and get back to austerity and spirituality. He drew up the two famous syntheses of Tibetan Buddhism, the Lam-rim and the Ngag-rim. The school he founded was immediately successful and, by virtue of a more centralised organisation, he succeeded in overcoming the resistance of the other sects. Ultimately the Gelupas succeeded in uniting the Tibetan Church. The famous monasteries of Ganden and Sera were founded in 1409 and 1419 respectively. Tsongkhapa's nephew, Geduntruppa, followed in his master's footsteps and founded the great Gelupa monastery at Tashilhunpo near Shighatse in 1447. After his death, Gedun Gyatso, his reincarnation, also followed the same line of teaching and finally came Sonam Gyatso who was recognised as the third incarnation of Gedun Truppa. Sonam Gyatso was a brilliant scholar who carried on Tsongkhapa's message with a missionary spirit and he visited Mongolia in the year 1578 and converted into Buddhism the leading prince Altan Khan together with a large number of his followers. Altan Khan gave Sonam Gyatso the title of Dalai (meaning ocean of learning), and Sonam applied this title retrospectively to his two predecessors Gedun Truppa and Gedun Gyatso. So he became the third Dalai Lama of the Gelupa sect. There were other Tibetan Lamas who also visited Mongolia, but none of them reached the eminence of Sonam Gyatso and in this way the foundations

on which the supremacy of the Dalai Lama was eventually to rest were laid. The introduction of Lamaism amongst the Mongols led to the unification of the fighting Mongol tribes and became the rallying point for the consolidation of the second great Mongol empire. At the time of the third Dalai Lama, the Gelupas had no temporal influence in Tibet, which was in the hands of the Tsang kings, who were helped by the Karmapas; but the austerity, discipline and spiritual quality of the Lamas of the Gelupa sect attracted an increasing number of followers and influential nobles, and in course of time the Gelupa sect became the principal rivals of the Karmapas. But Tibet continued to be riven by factions, U and Tsang provinces continually fighting against each other and the nobles changing sides as it suited them. At this juncture came Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, the fifth Dalai Lama. He was a scholar and thinker and a politician of the highest acumen. He understood the gravity of the situation and realised that Tibet must be unified if it was to be saved from utter destruction. He invited Gusri Khan, the Khosot Mongol prince, to put an end to this long conflict and get the better of his powerful adversaries, the Tsang and the Karmapas. In 1642, Gusri Khan invaded Tibet, defeated and killed the Tsang king, displaced the Karmapa Lamas from the high estate and set up the Dalai Lama of the day as the religious head of the country. Gusri Khan assumed the title of the king of Tibet and the Dalai Lama became the religious head. The relationship between these two was that of a patron and a priest, in which the temporal support of the lay power was given to the high priest in return for the spiritual support of the religious power to the ruler. Gusri Khan himself retired to Mongolia and left a Regent to look after the Tibetan kingdom. When Gusri Khan died in 1655, his successors, though they retained the title of king of Tibet, showed little interest in the actual administration of the country and left it in the hands of the Regent to look after their interests at Lhasa. But the fifth Dalai Lama, who had concentrated all powers in himself, gradually assumed the power of appointing the Regent also and he actually appointed Sange Gyatso, his own spiritual son, as the Regent. To Sange Gyatso is credited the introduction of many of

the modern reforms of Tibetan administration. During the fifth Dalai Lama's period, Tibet recovered much of the lost territory in the west up to Ladakh, finances of the State were put in order, census was held, penal laws were promulgated and trade prospered. He renewed contacts with India and the translation of many Sanskrit and Pāli books was also undertaken. This is the new period of Tibetan history beginning with the rule of the Dalai Lama during which the reunification of Tibet was brought about.

Writing of the fifth Dalai Lama, Richardson says, "The Dalai Lama's skill in foreign affairs is only one aspect of his dominant political character. The title, the Great Fifth, by which he was generally known, rests even more on his powers of organisation and leadership, on the blend of forceful measures and conciliation by which he brought peace and unity to Tibet and combined for the first time temporal and spiritual rule in one person, on his strict supervision of religious discipline and on the literary works for which he himself found time and in which he encouraged others. He was also a vigorous builder and the soaring majesty of the vast palace monastery he caused to be raised on the Potala Hill at Lhasa is a noble memorial of his greatness."

While Gusri Khan and the fifth Dalai Lama were working out a new pattern of rule for Tibet, another branch of the Mongols, the Manchus, led by Nurhachi was making inroads into China which the Ming dynasty was unable to resist. Ultimately, Nurhachi's son and successor, Abahai, assumed the title of Emperor of China and founded the Ching dynasty. But the Manchus never exercised any authority over the Koshot Mongols who were independent rulers of the Koko Nor area. Hence it is wrong to assume that the Manchu Emperors exercised any authority over Tibet at this time.

Whilst Gusri Khan was still living, at his instance and at the invitation of the then Manchu Emperor Shunchih, the Dalai Lama had visited Peking. There he was treated with extraordinary respect and it is even mentioned that he was given the same honours as an independent monarch, though Gusri was still the titular king of Tibet and the Dalai Lama held his position under Gusri's patronage. After Gusri's death when the Dalai Lama became the

sole administrator, his influence was exerted not only amongst the Tibetans but also amongst the Tibetan-speaking people of the Chinese-held provinces. He utilised his religious influence amongst the Mongols to restrain the warlike propensities of the new tribe of Dzungars, which was coming to the forefront, and to protect the Khoshot tribe to which Gusri had belonged. Thus he was also warding off a threat to China, because the Manchus also wanted to keep the Dzungars in check and in the Dalai Lama they found a good ally.

The fifth Dalai Lama's death in A.D. 1682 was not notified for a long time by the Regent, Sange Gyatso, either to the titular king of Tibet, Lhabzang Khan, a direct descendant of Gusri Khan, or to the Manchu Emperor in Peking. Ultimately a new incarnation, Tshangyang Gyatso, was found. He was trained in Lhasa in the normal way and was installed on the throne as the sixth Dalai Lama in 1696. But this Dalai Lama turned out to be a man of profane habits with little religious inclination. He was a poet and lived a carefree life. So the Regent, Sange Gyatso, retained the control of administration in his own hands. But he overstepped himself. Instead of maintaining a balance between the Dzungars, the Khoshot Mongols and the Manchus, as the fifth Dalai Lama had done, Sagne Gyatso wanted to overthrow the overlordship of the Khoshot Mongols by calling in the Dzungars for help. The Manchus themselves were hostile to the Dzungars and it would be against their interest if, by displacing the Khoshot Mongols, the Dzungars got a foothold in Tibet and through Tibet seized the religious leadership in Mongolia. So when Lhabzang Khan turned to the Emperor for assistance against the Dzungars, who were too powerful for him, the Emperor readily agreed. Lhabzang Khan then brought his troops from Mongolia to Tibet and in a brief war Regent Sange Gyatso was killed. Lhabzang removed the sixth Dalai Lama, who was from all appearances unsuitable for that office, and he died on the way to Mongolia. Lhabzang Khan then appointed, as the seventh Dalai Lama, a 21-year-old monk who was supposed to be his natural son. This the Tibetans would not tolerate and the Chinese Emperor was also wise enough not to give recognition to Lhabzang Khan's nominee.

The Tibetans later found the real incarnation by their own efforts in Litang, and in order to turn out Lhabzang Khan and his nominee turned to the Dzungars for assistance. The Dzungars readily obliged and in 1717 they invaded Tibet, stormed Lhasa and killed Lhabzang. They also deposed the seventh Dalai Lama appointed by Lhabzang Khan. But in one respect they failed. They had promised to bring the new incarnation from Litang, but they were outmanoeuvred by the Manchu Emperor who got hold of the child and took him under his control before the Dzungars could get him. The result was deep disappointment to the Tibetans who did not get their Dalai Lama. In the meantime, the Dzungars started looting the monasteries of Tibet, further enraging the Tibetan population. The Tibetans then rose against the Dzungars whose behaviour was intolerable and waited for help from China which Lhabzang Khan had summoned before his defeat. The Emperor got his long-sought-for opportunity and in 1718 he dispatched a military expedition to Tibet. It was annihilated by the Dzungars not far from Lhasa. The Emperor then sent a stronger force which fought its way to Lhasa in 1720, drove the Dzungars out of Tibet and escorted the long-sought-for minor Dalai Lama to Lhasa. The Tibetans were happy and declared this boy as the seventh Dalai Lama ignoring completely the nominee of Lhabzang Khan. The Manchu Army was welcomed at Lhasa as the saviour of the Tibetans, the restorer of peace and the bringer of the Dalai Lama. The Chinese Emperor secured both his objectives, i.e. a footing in Lhasa and the key to religious control over Mongolia which could be done only through the Dalai Lama. This was the foundation of nearly two centuries of Manchu overlordship of Tibet. The overlord was not a Chinese emperor but a Mongol whose father had defeated the Chinese emperor and established the Manchu rule over the Chinese. There was no treaty or exchange of letters. In the confusion following the Dzungar terror, the Manchu generals simply took control, restored order and helped to organise a new government in place of the old. Traditional Tibetan forms were maintained. However, they made a very important change by setting up a Council of Ministers as the most important administrative body to advise the Dalai

Lama. The post of the king and the office of the Regent to represent the king were abolished. The administrative responsibilities of the Tibetan Government extended from western Tibet to upper Yangtse. But above all there was a Manchu Military Governor with a garrison of 2,000 troops.

As soon as the Tibetan Government was in running order, it found the Manchu supremacy irksome. The posting of the Chinese garrison in Lhasa was not to the liking of the Tibetans, because they had to pay for its upkeep and it caused local shortages of supplies. The Council of Ministers made a representation to the Emperor, who agreed to withdraw most of the troops and to substitute the military representative by a civilian. Then followed much intrigue within the Council of Ministers and the principal Minister, who had the backing of the Chinese, was murdered. This threw Tibet again into a state of civil war in 1727-1728 and there was a talk of the Dzungars arriving again. The Emperor sent an army when the various contending parties appealed to him for help. This was the second time the Manchu troops came into Tibet—again on invitation from the Tibetans. But by the time the army arrived, one of the contenders, Phola Teji, had come out supreme and, as he had previously been the supporter of Lhabzang Khan, he was acceptable to the Chinese Emperor. The Tibetan Council was reconstituted under the leadership of Phola Teji. The Emperor also appointed two civilian Chinese officers or representatives (Ambans) with a military commander to ensure respect for his position. Though the Emperor did not directly interfere in Tibetan affairs the presence of these representatives ensured that his advice on matters of administration and policy would be respected.

One of the results of the reorganisation of the government was the devolution of the temporal powers from the Dalai Lama, which had been built up at the time of the fifth Dalai Lama to the Council of Ministers. When the civil war was going on (1727-1728), the seventh Dalai Lama was still a minor; but as the Emperor considered that his father and other officers were responsible for the intrigue, he removed the Dalai Lama from Lhasa by inviting him to visit Peking. But he was taken no further than Litang, where he

stayed for seven years, after which he was allowed to return to Lhasa on the condition that he would strictly refrain from political activities. Though still surrounded with the highest formal honour as the Head of the Church, the Dalai Lama was no longer free. Effective power had passed into the hands of the Council of Ministers who, however, had to pay due regard to the monastic opinion. Phola Teji, who had come out successful in the civil war, was a man of great ability and he succeeded in governing Tibet in such a way that he restored peace and confidence without offending any section or community. He did not oppose the Chinese, but his ability and tact reduced the Manchu supremacy to a matter of form only and the Emperor depended on Phola Teji so much that he did not worry about the internal affairs of Tibet any longer. Thus Phola became the effective ruler of the country and, in 1740, he was given the title of a prince or king.

When the Manchus removed the Dalai Lama to Litang, they also took steps to build up another Lama of the Gelupa Church as a rival to the Dalai Lama and he came to be known as the Panchen Lama. The first Panchen Lama had been installed in the Tashilhunpo monastery by the fifth Dalai Lama. To him the Manchus offered vast areas of north and western Tibet. The Panchen Lama however did not accept this offer except the districts which were in the immediate vicinity of Tashilhunpo. Since for the next 100 years the Dalai Lamas were completely ineffective, the Panchen Lama, in fact, exercised nearly independent authority in the areas under his control, though Lhasa never accepted the Panchen Lama as anything other than the head of one of the great monasteries under Lhasa's control.

Phola Teji died in 1747 and was succeeded by his younger son Gyurmé Namgyal, who had been trained for this succession. Gyurmé was an ambitious person who did not have the tact which his father possessed. He somehow or the other persuaded the Emperor to reduce the strength of the Manchu garrison in Lhasa. He then started intriguing with the Dzungars to oust the Manchus from Tibet. He was arrogant and removed all possible contenders for power by putting his brothers and nephews to death. The Chinese Ambans reported to Peking their suspicion that Gyurmé

was planning for a revolt, but the Emperor paid no heed. Then the Ambans invited Gyurmé to their residence and murdered him. The Tibetans' natural dislike for the Chinese came to a head immediately and, though they had no love for Gyurmé, they would not stand the murder of their ruler by the Chinese, and they attacked the residence of the Ambans, whom they killed along with many of the Chinese officers and soldiers. By this time the seventh Dalai Lama had matured and he showed his ability and firmness by restoring order and punishing the offenders. He appointed a senior Minister to carry on the Government and he reported to the Emperor what had happened. Before, however, that letter arrived, the Emperor had learnt what had happened in Tibet and, thinking that a full-scale rebellion had taken place, had dispatched a military expedition. When the army arrived, order had already been restored in Lhasa. There was no fight against the Tibetans because, in fact, there was no rebellion against the Manchu Emperor but only an attack on his representatives who had exceeded their functions. This was the third military intervention by the Manchu Emperor in Tibet. The Manchu overlord then reformed the Tibetan Government and abolished the kingship. The Council of Ministers was restored to the position of importance and the Dalai Lama, who had proved his ability and readiness to cooperate, was given back much of the power that had been exercised by his predecessor, the fifth Dalai Lama. The Ambans were now made responsible for the general supervision of the Tibetan Government and for giving it advice if that appeared necessary. These changes amounted to the resurgence of religious supremacy as against the nobility. For the first time, also, the Chinese started taking an active interest in the running of the government through the Ambans.

Though the post of Regent appointed by the Mongols had been abolished after the fifth Dalai Lama, yet once the Dalai Lama assumed temporal powers it was evident that a Regent would be required during the period immediately after the Dalai Lama's death till a new Dalai Lama was found and during the period of his minority; and the custom grew up that this post of Regent would be held by one of the High Lamas of Tibet to be selected

by the National Assembly. Circumstances shaped themselves in such a way that for 120 years after the death of the seventh Dalai Lama, Kesang Gyatso, in 1757 till the accession to power of the thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1876 there were long periods of continuous rule by the Regents, because the succeeding Dalai Lamas died before reaching maturity; and though the eighth Dalai Lama reached the age of 45, he did not take any interest in temporal affairs and for most of his life he allowed the Regent to conduct his administration. The ninth and the tenth Dalai Lamas died before attaining majority. Two Dalai Lamas, the eleventh and the twelfth, were enshrined but both died before they reached the age of 25. It has been alleged, though there may not be any substance in this, that this state of affairs was brought about by the Chinese Ambans who did not want a Dalai Lama to come up and again exercise supreme power in Tibet. During this period, the country withdrew into even deeper isolation under the leadership of the rigid monastic hierarchy which was now subject to foreign supervision but at the same time vigorously guarded the ancient traditions and was reluctant to admit change of any sort.

However, Tibet was not to be left in peace. The Bhutanese rose and in 1770 overran Sikkim and Darjeeling, but were ultimately driven back by the British, who had by that time consolidated their control in Bengal. Then the threat came from the Nepalese. This country, so long as it was ruled by the Buddhist Newars, had remained a friend of Tibet and for a long time many of the Tibetan kings of Guge had held sway over large parts of Nepal also. But when the Hindu Gurkhas under Prithi Narayan conquered Nepal, they invaded Tibet in 1788 and occupied some of the frontier districts. The Tibetan and the Chinese Commanders in agreement with a Tibetan Minister came to terms promising to pay a tribute to King Prithi Narayan and persuaded the Gurkhas to turn back. This arbitrary agreement, which was not approved by the Dalai Lama, was not accepted by the Chinese Emperor also when it reached him. When the second instalment of the tribute was not paid, the Gurkhas entered Tibet a second time and sacked Shighatse and some other monasteries and removed many of the precious pieces of art and treasure. The Chinese Emperor sent a strong

army which chased the Gurkhas back to their country and nearly reached Kathmandu when the Gurkhas sued for peace, which was agreed to in 1792. The Nepalese then had to agree to pay a quinquennial sum and the terms of the treaty were carved on a stone monument at Lhasa. This was the fourth time that the Chinese Army came into Tibet, but on this occasion it came to protect Tibet from an external enemy. And these events had serious repercussions on Tibet. The power of the Chinese representatives at Lhasa was increased and the Lhasa Government became a shadow government, carrying out the orders of Peking. China even started interfering in the choice of the incarnations and insisted that the new Dalai Lama should be selected by drawing of lots. The Tibetans resisted this and succeeded in keeping to their own form of selection. However, whenever the Dalai Lama was chosen, the Emperor, by signifying his post-facto acceptance, sought to establish his own authority over the selection.

After 1792, Tibet's doors were closed to the foreigners. By this time the British had entrenched themselves in a position of power to the south of the Himalayas and Christian missionaries were making inroads among the tribes residing in these areas which were previously under Buddhist influence. When the Nepalese had invaded Tibet, Tashilhunpo had asked the British for assistance, but there was no response and there was a suspicion in the minds of the Tibetans and the Chinese that the British had connived at this invasion. Although the Chinese maintained their suzerainty over Tibet, their control on the internal affairs of Tibet grew feebler and feebler as the Manchu dynasty started losing its strength in China itself due to both internal factions and the encroachments by various European countries. The Anglo-Chinese War of 1840 further enfeebled the Manchus. When the Dogras invaded Western Tibet in 1841, the Chinese Emperor could not come to Tibet's aid and the invaders were finally repelled by a force which was purely Tibetan. Again in 1855, when in violation of the treaty the Gurkhas attacked Tibet, there was no Chinese Army and the Tibetans were defeated and had to accept a humiliating treaty. So by the middle of the nineteenth century the Manchu Emperor, not being in a position any longer to protect Tibet from foreign in-

vasion and having been enfeebled in his own territories, had practically lost all control over Tibet, which continued to maintain its internal autonomy under the rule of the Regents. At least one of them turned out to be extremely able and succeeded in bringing about unity and peace in that country.

After this period of stagnation there came in A.D. 1876 the thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thupten Gyatso, the most notable figure in Tibet after the fifth Dalai Lama, and in his time Tibet started taking a direct interest in international relations.

3 Imperialist Intrigues

IN SPITE OF the Chinese ultra-conservative policy in closing Tibet's doors to foreigners in 1792, Tibet slowly drifted into the stream of international events which in a few years were to alter the face of Asia and the thirteenth Dalai Lama found himself in that current. Energetic and with political shrewdness that grew with age, he ruled Tibet in one of the gravest moments in her history, and saw the fulfilment, albeit briefly, of the prophecies ascribed to Padmasambhava, that after a long period of Chinese occupation the Tibetans would be able to throw off the Chinese overlordship and re-assert their independence. The thirteenth Dalai Lama had, in his youth, come under the influence of a Buryat monk, Dordjieff, and, therefore, had acquired certain leanings towards Russia. He had even accepted an invitation from the Czar to make an official visit to Moscow, though this never came off.

Even before 1792, Tibet had been traversed by various Jesuit and Capuchin monks, who had tried to propagate Christianity and had even established missions, but they had made no progress and by 1792 they had all left Tibet. A few westerners had travelled through Tibet in disguise and written interesting memoirs of their journeys. Tibet always had friendly relations with the Newar rulers of Nepal and this friendship was only broken when the Hindu Gurkhas came to power in that country. But even then trade with Nepal continued and also cultural exchanges. Similarly there was trade with India on a fairly large scale and there were several marts in India and Tibet which were regularly visited by Tibetans and Indians. Buddha Gaya, Sarnath, Sanchi, etc. attracted thousands of Buddhist pilgrims every year and Kailash and Mansarovar hundreds of Hindus from India and Nepal. Tibet had for centuries provided religious leadership in Mongolia and till the end the Mongolians accepted the Dalai Lama as the

head of their Church. So the closed door policy imposed from 1792 was really about the entry into Tibet of European elements from the south. The British had already established themselves in Bengal and other areas of India and missionary activities were going on amongst the tribals south of the Himalayas, an area which had for centuries practised the Mahāyāna Buddhism and accepted the Dalai Lama or the heads of some of the other sects —Karmapas, Sakyapas, etc.—as their religious heads. It was against this type of incursions by foreign missionaries that Tibet's doors were closed.

Earlier a reference has been made to the Bhutanese expedition to Sikkim, Darjeeling and parts of North Bengal. This happened when Warren Hastings was the Governor of Bengal. When British troops, after driving out the Bhutanese from the Bengal area, were poised for an entry into Bhutan, the Panchen Lama, on request from the Bhutan king who was afraid of the British capturing his territory, interceded and requested the British to withdraw from Bhutan. This has been sometimes taken to signify that Bhutan was at one time a part of Tibetan territory under the Dalai Lama's control. This was not correct. Bhutan had never accepted Tibetan supremacy, though its Church was subordinate to the Karmapa Church of Tibet (and not to the Gelupa Church of which the Dalai Lama was the head). However, Warren Hastings took the Panchen Lama's advice and withdrew the troops from Bhutan. Later he sent an official envoy, Bogle, to Tashilhunpo. Bogle stayed there for a long time, married one of the Panchen Lama's sisters and created a very favourable impression. The Panchen Lama died in 1780 and the following year Bogle also died in India. When the Regent informed Warren Hastings about the find of the new incarnation, Hastings despatched another officer called Turner to Shighatse and he also was treated well by the Regent. But neither of these two Britishers was allowed to proceed to Lhasa, because the Lhasa Government would not admit the Panchen Lama's authority to entertain a foreign envoy.

It appeared to the British in India under the East India Company that there could be prosperous trade with Tibet if facilities

for this could be secured; but the British representative in China, who did not know the conditions in Tibet, proceeded on the assumption that the Chinese exercised active sovereignty in Tibet and that, therefore, any negotiations for trade could only be processed through Peking. Even the British Foreign Office was then working under the same impression. Many attempts were made by the British to get the Chinese to agree to allow them to have trade relations with Tibet, but these were thwarted by the Chinese on one excuse or another. Moreover, the thirst for acquiring more knowledge about the conditions in Tibet was growing and there were several attempts to march expeditions from India through Tibet to China or in the reverse direction, but all these attempts also proved to be fruitless due to Chinese obduracy. The Chinese did not want any foreigners to develop relations with Tibet as a result of which the latter might develop an independent outlook and deprive the Chinese of even the nominal control they had over the internal affairs of Tibet. These attempts however could not be resisted for ever and ultimately a weak China succumbed to the pressure and agreed to the introduction of an article in the Chefoo Convention (1876) providing facilities to a British mission for crossing Tibet either from India or China. But it was not till 1885 that the Government of India decided to test the value of this Chinese concession and in that year a mission assembled near the Indo-Tibetan border in Sikkim with a small military escort. But before the mission entered Tibet, it was abandoned as a concession to the Chinese in return for the Chinese acknowledging British supremacy in Burma. Actually the Tibetans, who were not a party to the Chefoo Convention, did not agree to the expedition and the Chinese had no power to make Tibet do so. So to save face the Chinese used the Burma-Tibet Convention of 1886 to get the British to withdraw their request for an expedition through Tibet. The Tibetans, however, did not know of this development and, alarmed at the collection of the mission and troops in Sikkim, sent an army across the frontier and occupied a portion of Sikkim. At first no attempt was made by the British to drive out the intruders and approaches were made to Peking, but Peking was in no position to exercise any influence on the Tibetans, so ineffective had

its titular rule in Tibet become, though the Ambans were still present in Lhasa. At last in 1888 the British served an ultimatum to the Tibetan Commander and also to the Dalai Lama, but it was ignored. Then the British sent a force to Sikkim. In the face of it the Tibetans at first withdrew, but then made a surprise attack and were promptly driven out of Sikkim and the British pursued the Tibetans into the Chumbi Valley, but thereafter retired.

This clash and the British pursuit across the frontier alarmed Peking, where it was feared that this might be followed by a direct settlement between Britain and Tibet. So the Chinese opened negotiations in India to define the status of Sikkim and to provide for trade between India and Tibet. After long discussions, an Anglo-Chinese Convention was signed in 1890 which fixed the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet, and recognised Sikkim to be a Protectorate of Britain. Three years later a treaty of trade relations with Tibet was signed, but this was futile because, though a Tibetan Minister was present at Calcutta at the time of the negotiations, he did not sign it and the Tibetans obstructed its implementation, and the Chinese were in no position to compel the Tibetans to accept it. Thus the stalemate continued till 1899 when Lord Curzon arrived as the Viceroy in India.

From the beginning Curzon was anxious to open direct relations with Tibet by sending a mission as he realised that Peking's sovereignty or suzerainty over Tibet was a myth. He addressed a letter to the Dalai Lama who, however, took shelter behind the Emperor's name and did not accept it. During this period, Britain was inhibited by the bogey of Russian expansion in Asia and particularly the threat from Russia to her Indian empire and the entire effort and attention of London was directed at preventing Russia from gaining any influence in Tibet and in this attempt the British Government found China's titular suzerainty over Tibet to be convenient. The British were, therefore, unwilling to recognise the *de facto* independence of Tibet. It is most unfortunate that this consideration of Britain's own interest *vis-a-vis* the Russians made the powerful British at the beginning of the twentieth century shut their eyes to the actual situation in Tibet and swallow the myth of Chinese suzerainty. When it was found out that the Dalai

Lama was keeping up contacts with the Czar through his tutor Dorjieff, the need to secure a foothold in Tibet became urgent and, unable to assail Curzon's logic pressing for direct negotiations with Tibet, the British Government reluctantly allowed the Indian Government to send a mission up to Khamba Dzong. The Mission under Col. Younghusband accordingly arrived there in July, 1903, but was met only by junior officers from Tibet. There was no Chinese representative and the Chinese pleaded that the Tibetans had prevented their Ambans from meeting the British at Khamba Dzong. As no fruitful discussions could be held and the mission had wasted five months in Khamba Dzong, Curzon secured London's agreement for the mission to advance to Gyantse. Even this permission was given most reluctantly and it was stipulated that no representative should be left at Gyantse after the negotiations were completed. For this the mission required a stronger armed support and so three to four thousand troops were transported across the frontier. The advance force wintered at Tuna and the main force remained at Phari. The Tibetans started collecting their forces and in a fight which took place between the two sides the Tibetan Army was quickly worsted leaving three hundred dead. Then the British moved on to Gyantse and on the way there was a further engagement wherein one hundred and eighty Tibetans were killed. After reaching Gyantse in April, 1904, the main body of the troops was returned to the Chumbi Valley and Younghusband stayed with a small squad to await the Chinese representative. In the meantime, the Tibetan Government collected another force and attacked the small party at Gyantse. The supporting force from Chumbi had to be rushed in to help, and again the Tibetans were driven back leaving three hundred killed. There was no other alternative now but to proceed to Lhasa, and this the mission did. By the time the mission reached Lhasa, the Dalai Lama with his Adviser, Dorjieff, had fled to Urga in Mongolia, leaving the authority to a Regent, Tri Rimpoche. The Regent called the Tibetan Assembly and obtained its authority to conduct a treaty and soon an Anglo-Tibetan Convention was signed on September 7, 1904. Soon after this the mission returned. Actually, the terms given by the British fell far short of what Curzon had

desired. He wanted a British representative to be posted at Lhasa, but the British Government was afraid of adverse Russian reactions and so would not agree. In this Convention the main terms were the re-affirmation of the Tibetan-Sikkim frontier as fixed in 1890; opening of trade marts and the posting of British Agents at Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok (western Tibet); provision for negotiating fresh trade relations and excluding any other foreign power from exerting influence in Tibet. The Chinese were conspicuously absent and their exclusion from the Anglo-Tibetan Convention of 1904, though it was signed at Lhasa, would only prove that not only had the Chinese no authority to dictate in the internal affairs of Tibet, but even as regards foreign policy the Tibetans were in a position to ignore the Chinese completely. This treaty also nullified the claim of any suzerainty or even of any special connection with China, and on the contrary it established Great Britain in a special position as a kind of protector to Tibet. But, unfortunately, London, inhibited by its fears of Russian expansionism, would not give up the make-believe of the Chinese suzerainty in Tibet, and so the British wanted a confirmation by Peking of this Convention and after a long series of negotiations secured the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906. This considerably modified the Anglo-Tibetan Treaty of 1904 in favour of China by accepting Chinese suzerainty over Tibet,and the privileged position which the British had acquired in Tibet in 1904 was given up and the duty of maintaining Tibet's integrity was given to China. Thus artificially the British allowed such Chinese rights to be recognised in Tibet which the Chinese,during the previous 30 to 40 years, had been unable to exereise. The Tibetans were not consulted nor informed about the Anglo-Chinese Convention and this was another unfortunate aspect of the British attitude towards this small country. Further disregard for the Tibetans was shown and a further surrender of the privileged position acquired by the British in 1904 was made in the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, by which also the British bound themselves not to negotiate with Tibet except through the Chinese Government nor to send a representative to Lhasa. Tibet was again not consulted. In order to keep their own trade interests intact in China and Tibet, and in order to keep

the Russians out, the British sacrificed the independence of Tibet, though they knew full well that the people of Tibet had nothing in common with the Chinese and were not guided by them in any way.

The Dalai Lama's flight to Urga in Mongolia had surprised the Chinese court which promptly deposed him, but this measure angered the Tibetans who would not suffer foreign interference in a matter of divine authority. The British expedition to Lhasa was a serious loss of face to the Chinese Government and was seen as a threat to its position in Central Asia. No longer did the belt of mountains that protected Tibet in the south present an obstacle to a well-equipped army and, therefore, China no longer felt safe on her western frontier. The Chinese reacted with unexpected speed and began to take military measures to restore their authority in Tibet. New administrative arrangements were made on Tibet's eastern frontier with China but this in its turn led to violent opposition by the Tibetans. But the picture was completely changed by the end of 1905 when the Manchu General, Chao Erh-feng, arrived on this frontier. By 1910, through efficient and utterly ruthless use of force, this General had brought the whole of the eastern borderland under a degree of control of the Chinese such as had never existed before. Also, taking advantage of the 1906 Convention, the Chinese promptly appointed a Commissioner to manage things on the Indian border. The Dalai Lama was in exile. There was no source to which the Tibetans could turn for assistance. The new officer Chang Yin-tang set about his work energetically and dismissed all the Tibetan ministers who had taken part in the 1904 Anglo-Tibetan negotiations. Direct contact between the British and the Tibetans was prohibited. The British were prevented from acquiring property and the opening of new trade marts and postal communications with Gartok was also stopped. Chang also made approaches to Nepal and Bhutan in an attempt to detach them from British influence. All that the British could do was to send a mild protest through the British Ambassador in China. Most ignominiously the British agreed to the formulation of a new set of trade regulations in 1908 and this time the negotiations were conducted solely by the Chinese representa-

tive, and the Tibetan minister who was present had to sign the agreement, though he had taken no active part in the discussions.

Due to the continued Tibetan opposition to the Chinese Government's interference in their religious matters by deposing the thirteenth Dalai Lama, the Chinese Emperor was forced to restore the Dalai Lama, and this was done by a decree in which the Dalai Lama was described as a loyal and submissive Regent bound by the laws of the State. The Dalai Lama was then invited to Peking where he was treated as a dependent ruler but was accorded special respect by reason of his religious dignity. The Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa towards the end of 1909, but with his liking for the Chinese by no means enhanced. He was also alarmed at the activities of the Chinese General in eastern Tibet. This General, having reduced all Tibetan opposition, then threatened to march into Lhasa itself. This was a plan to convert Tibet firmly into a part of China.

For the first time in history the Tibetans appealed for outside help against the Chinese when in 1909 the Dalai Lama addressed an appeal to Great Britain and other foreign powers for intervention to prevent the Chinese from dispatching troops to Lhasa. The British also sent a protest to Peking. The Chinese met this protest by saying that the troops were being sent to police the trade routes as provided in the trade regulations. At Lhasa, the Amban succeeded in reducing Tibetan anxieties by similar assurances and by understating the number of troops. But ultimately in 1910 General Chao arrived in Lhasa with 2,000 troops. The Dalai Lama fled Tibet for the second time but this time instead of going to Mongolia he escaped to India. An imperial proclamation was issued by the Chinese Court deposing him for the second time and directing a new incarnation to be chosen in his place. For all purposes General Chao and the Amban took over the Government of Tibet. Though the British Government lodged a protest, they were more anxious to preserve their trade rights and would have been quite satisfied if the Chinese ensured these rights for them. They were not in any way interested in the feelings of the three million Tibetans who had been forcibly subjugated under the Chinese rule.

The invasion of 1910 was the turning point in the relations between China and Tibet and marked a break with the previous Chinese policy. This was the first Chinese Army to arrive at Lhasa against the will of the Tibetans. All previous expeditions had come to restore order or to protect Tibet against foreign enemies and were not opposed by the Tibetans. After each expedition, though there had been some reorganisation of Chinese relations with the Tibetan Government, there was no move for taking over the administration. Although the Tibetans had never explicitly declared their consent to Chinese overlordship, they never openly questioned the right of the Emperor to have his representative at Lhasa or to send his troops on occasions. The Emperors on their side had been careful for two centuries to do nothing to upset the otherwise peaceful relationship between the two countries. So ultimately the outcome of the Younghusband expedition was that in its wake the Chinese Army came into Lhasa, which the British did nothing to prevent, and this placed the Tibetans completely under the subjugation of the Chinese. All the concessions which the British had gained as a result of the Younghusband expedition were given up and the British were forced to recognise China as the master of Tibet. The British Government did not respond to the appeal of the Dalai Lama for assistance to drive out the Chinese; on the other hand, they used their influence to induce the Dalai Lama to accept Chinese suzerainty or sovereignty. The British Government only woke up when the Chinese started intrigues in Bhutan and Nepal also and then with a sudden burst of energy the British informed China that any attempt to convert these into vassal states of China would be resisted.

The Chinese subjugation of Tibet did not go very far. The Tibetans non-cooperated and obstructed every action of the Chinese. It became impossible for the Chinese to function. As in the past, the Tibetans would have been able to secure the withdrawal of the Chinese, but the process was accelerated due to the breakdown of the Chinese Empire after the death of the Emperor and the dowager Empress, when a revolution broke out in China in 1911 and its shock was felt in Lhasa also. The Chinese troops mutinied against their officers; some deserted and others took to

looting and destruction, which roused the Tibetans to furious counter-measures. General Chang, who had, in the meantime, been appointed the Amban, contrived to keep a part of the force with him, but in other parts of Tibet the Chinese garrisons were set upon by angry Tibetans and at several places they were completely annihilated. At Lhasa and Shighatse, fighting went on for a long time. Tentative suggestions by both the parties that the British might mediate were turned down by reason of the "treaty obligations". Yet the British Government advised the Dalai Lama that he should use his influence to stop the fighting, save the Chinese from annihilation and allow them to be conducted safely back to China. Eventually through the good offices of the Nepalese Government a conciliation of that sort was agreed upon and by the end of 1912 the remaining Chinese troops were removed from Tibet by way of India, disarmed and shipped back to China. In June, 1912, the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet and declared its independence. Thus Tibet by physically throwing out the Chinese army had asserted its independence and whatever might have been the status of Tibet before 1912, whether the Chinese were suzerain or sovereign, whether Tibet was an autonomous or a vassal state under China or was a part of China, it was clear that no vestige of Chinese control remained after 1912 when Tibet gained its complete independence.

The Chinese capacity at compromise was infinite and though the Dalai Lama with the authority of the National Assembly had, after driving out the Chinese from Tibet, declared its independence, the new Republic of China issued a decree reinstating the Dalai Lama in his office. But the Tibetan Government did not make any concessions to the Chinese and took active measures to establish its own position. It sent strong reinforcements to the eastern front to meet the new threat from the Chinese and succeeded in establishing a strong line on the eastern frontier just short of Chamdo. Within that frontier for the next forty years thereafter there remained no Chinese official and no trace of Chinese authority or administration.

4 Four Decades of Independence

THE BRITISH QUIETLY ignored the declaration of independence by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan National Assembly. They apprehended that it would not be possible for a weak Tibet to maintain its independence in a predatory world; and with the Russians sweeping fast into Mongolia, the British were alarmed that they might soon penetrate into Tibet also. The British themselves were unwilling to take over the protectorate of Tibet, as they were already over-stretched and had been forced to make a retreat in the Boer War. With the German menace confronting them in Europe, the Biritish were unwilling to further increase their commitments in Asia and to take over the duty of protecting another 2,000 miles of difficult frontier and an area of 5,00,000 sq. miles. The recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet would keep the Russians away. Moreover, the British had a lot of trade interests in China and so would not like to antagonise that country; nor would they like to have Chinese soldiers on the Indian frontiers which eventuality might arise if they accepted the full-scale sovereignty of China over Tibet. It would serve the British interests if a weak and neutralised Tibet enjoying autonomy existed on India's frontiers, so that no elaborate and expensive protective measures would be required to guard them. Probably the British also did not fully comprehend that the old relationship between the Chinese Emperor and the Dalai Lama was a personal one—that of a Patron and a Priest—and there was no political relationship between the Chinese and the Tibetan people as such. With the elimination of the Emperor and the introduction of a republican form of government, that personal tie had also disappeared. In the circumstances, the recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet would be tantamount to the recognition of the supremacy of the Chinese people over the Tibetans—a situation

which had never existed throughout history.

Hence in reply to the Dalai Lama's message declaring Tibet's independence, the British sent a message expressing the desire of the Government of India to see that the internal autonomy of Tibet under Chinese suzerainty was maintained without Chinese interference so long as the treaty obligations were duly performed and cordial relations preserved between Tibet and India. The British also sent a note to this effect to the Chinese Government in 1912 and invited China and Tibet for talks to define the status of Tibet and particularly to re-formulate the trade regulations. The Chinese were at that time disturbed at the advance of Russia into Mongolia over which also the Chinese claimed suzerainty. They, therefore, could not ignore the British invitation for talks and, after many evasive moves, finally agreed, when the British threatened that they would conduct direct negotiations with the Tibetans, if the Chinese delayed any longer. Ultimately the plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, China and Tibet met on equal terms at Simla on October 6, 1913. The British representative was Sir Henry McMahon; China was represented by Ivan Chen and Tibet by a leading Minister, Lönchu Satra.

During the negotiations, the Tibetans pressed for the acknowledgement of their independence, the abolition of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 and the revision of the trade regulations. They also pressed for the acceptance of a frontier with China which would include all the Tibetan people, that is right up to Tachienlu and the Koko Nor. The Chinese on their side put forward a claim to sovereignty over Tibet tracing it as far back as the conquest by Chengis Khan. They claimed the right to station an Amban and 2,000 troops to control the foreign and military affairs of the country. The Chinese Government aimed at the restoration of the political status defined under the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906. As regards the frontier, they claimed a line running through Giamda only 60 miles east of Lhasa. This would include in China large parts of Tibet over which China had never exercised any type of authority excepting after the conquest by Chao Erh-feng a few years earlier.

McMahon acted as a mediator between the two contending

parties. In order to reduce the gap between the Tibetan claim of independence and the Chinese claim of sovereignty, the British put forward the concept of autonomy and suzerainty hoping that a solution on these terms might restore peace between these two countries. The British wanted to restore the position that existed before 1904 hoping that this would allow the development of a stable Tibetan Government free from outside influence in closer relations than before with the British. Under much British pressure the Tibetans agreed to accept the formal suzerainty of the Chinese as a part of a bargain which would guarantee Tibet's freedom to conduct its internal affairs and, besides, put limits to the Chinese suzerainty. No Chinese officers or troops were to be sent to Tibet excepting one Chinese representative and his escort. Tibet was not to be converted into a province of China nor to be represented in the Chinese Parliament. Tibet also wanted the posting of a British official at Lhasa as a counter to the Chinese officer. But this last proposal was rejected by the British Government on the plea of their so-called treaty obligations with Russia, though the latter was flouting its obligations by penetrating into Mongolia. There was, however, a stronger disagreement on the question of Tibet's eastern boundary. Ultimately McMahon devised a plan of an Inner and an Outer Tibet. Outer Tibet, which bordered India and over which Lhasa had always exercised its full jurisdiction, would have its boundary up to the upper waters of the Yangtse. This was the boundary which had existed since the time of the Manchus. The Tibetan areas to the east of that line would be called Inner Tibet where the Dalai Lama would continue to exercise the customary religious authority over the monasteries, but which for administrative purposes would however be controlled by China.

After negotiations lasting for six months, a draft Tripartite Convention was prepared. Richardson has summarised this as follows :

(1) The Conventions of 1890, 1904 and 1906 were to stand except in so far that they might be modified by or be repugnant to the present Convention.

(2) Britain and China to recognise that Tibet was under Chinese suzerainty and to recognise also the autonomy of Outer Tibet, to respect its integrity and to abstain from any interference in its internal affairs.
(3) China not to send troops or station officers in Outer Tibet except an Amban and an escort of 300 men.
(4) Britain to be similarly bound for the Trade Agents and their escorts.
(5) China and Tibet not to negotiate with one another or with any other power except as provided in the 1904 and 1906 treaties.
(6) Cancellation of Article 3 of the 1906 Convention which virtually gave China a monopoly of all concessions over Tibet. But the Chinese position was safeguarded by not including China as a foreign power and, on the other hand, the British were to have the "most favoured nation" treatment in respect of trade.
(7) New trade relations were to be negotiated between Great Britain and Outer Tibet.
(8) The British Trade Agent at Gyantse might visit Lhasa as provided for in the 1904 Treaty.
(9) The limits of Inner and Outer Tibet were defined in a map attached to the Convention.
(10) Disputes arising from the Convention between China and Tibet would be referred to the British Government. (This last provision was later removed in deference to Russian wishes.)

Attached to the Convention was also a map showing the border of India and Tibet, which later came to be known as the McMahon Line. This was negotiated between the British and the Tibetan representatives but there was no specific negotiation with the Chinese. This map was also included as a part of the document which the Chinese and the Tibetan representatives signed.

The Chinese Government refused to ratify this Convention. Thereafter the British and the Tibetan representatives, after giving proper notice to the Chinese, proceeded to sign it. There was

a declaration that the Convention was binding on the British and the Tibetans, and that so long as the Chinese Government withheld its signature, it would be barred from the enjoyment of privileges accruing from that agreement.

Richardson rightly says that the advantages which the Chinese were deprived of, though not specifically catalogued, could be interpreted as follows :

(1) The operation in favour of China of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906.
(2) The recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet by the British and the Tibetan Governments.
(3) The right to station an Amban at Lhasa with an escort of 300 men.
(4) The admission that Tibet formed a part of China.
(5) The admission that China was not a foreign power for the purpose of the 1904 Anglo-Tibetan Convention.
(6) Any concern with the appointment of the Dalai Lama.
(7) Any limitation of the strength of the British escorts in Tibet.

As regards the Sino-Tibetan frontier, everything was left in the air. Theoretically the Chinese were deprived of any rights in Inner Tibet but, in actual fact, they were there.

In addition to this Convention, the British and the Tibetan plenipotentiaries signed new trade regulations, according to which some previous restrictions on trade were removed and the British control over the sites of the trade agencies was put on a proper basis. There was no mention of the Chinese in these regulations. The control over trade marts excepting for British enclaves, protection of trade routes and adjudication of disputes between British and Tibetan nationals were now all vested in the Tibetans. The earlier regulations about the eventual withdrawal of British escorts and the handing over by the British of their rest houses to the Chinese were cancelled. These trade regulations, in effect, accepted the new state of affairs established by the eviction of the Chinese from Tibet and recognised the right of the

Tibetans to conduct their trade with the British entirely by themselves.

By refusing to ratify the Convention, China reserved, in its own opinion, the right to settle with Tibet in its own time. It also maintained its control over the strip of Tibetan territory which Chao Erh-feng had conquered a few years earlier. The Tibetans were released from the offer made under British persuasion to surrender part of their sovereignty in return for Chinese guarantees of their autonomy and their joint frontier. They had been assured that the British Government would not recognise Chinese suzerainty unless the Chinese fulfilled their side of the bargain by ratifying the Convention. The Tibetans could also expect British diplomatic support and a supply of arms which they needed very badly. The British gained the most as they got the freedom of direct negotiations with the Tibetans, the right to send representatives on visits to Lhasa and the prospect of better commercial arrangements. The failure of the Chinese to ratify the Convention also conferred on the British almost exclusive political influence in Tibet. They also gained extra-territorial rights under the new trade regulations. Tibet had also undertaken an obligation not to negotiate with any other power without British consent. The British now had a properly defined frontier between Tibet and India, including Burma, along the crest of the Himalayas from the north-east corner of Bhutan to Isurazi Pass in North Burma.

The eastern frontier between Tibet and China had yet to be settled and desultory wars continued. Tibet asked for arms from the British which the latter very grudgingly supplied in minute quantities. Tibet was prohibited from obtaining arms from Japan or any other country. Surrounded as she was by China on one side and British India on the other, she could get arms only from one of these two countries or with their assistance. To receive this from China was out of the question. But the British would not agree either to supply arms or to allow Tibet to procure arms from other countries. This made Tibet helpless. Yet in the course of a few years the Tibetan Army succeeded in driving the Chinese forces well beyond the upper Yangtse and recapturing

Chamdo. The Tibetans even threatened Tachienlu. This was a good opportunity for the Tibetans to recover physically the entire area of Inner Tibet, but the British intervened and, on the threat of cutting off the supply of arms, particularly ammunition, made the Tibetans halt and accept an armistice according to which they withdrew to Derge. The Chinese also agreed not to advance beyond Kanze. This armistice which was signed at Rongbatsa in August, 1918, brought temporary peace. The Tibetans then expected the re-opening of negotiations for a final settlement, but it was not till May, 1919, that the Chinese made a move. They suggested certain changes to the 1914 Convention, particularly as regards the boundaries of Inner and Outer Tibets. The McMahon Line, i.e. the Indo-Tibet border, was not mentioned. But the Tibetans refused to concede anything more than they had offered in 1914. The Chinese then broke off the negotiations.

The British Government was annoyed at the abrupt way in which the Chinese broke off the talks. It was then decided that the time had come for more active encouragement of British relations with Tibet. The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 was no longer valid after the Russian revolution. Accordingly, Sir Charles Bell, who enjoyed the friendship and confidence of the Dalai Lama, was sent to Lhasa in 1920 to explain how the matter stood with regard to negotiations with China. The principal object of the visit was to demonstrate that the British Government intended to treat Tibetan autonomy as a reality by strengthening to a reasonable extent Tibet's ability to defend itself and by helping, so far as the Tibetans themselves wanted, to develop the country's resources. Underlying the design of strengthening Tibet was the hope that it might induce the Chinese Government to join a tripartite settlement. At the end of Bell's visit, therefore, an invitation to resume negotiations was again sent to the Chinese Government which was informed that if it did not respond, the British Government would not any longer withhold the recognition of Tibet as an autonomous State under the suzerainty of China and would proceed to deal with Tibet in future on that basis. But in this there was a wrong interpretation of the British commitments to the Tibetan Government. In the negotiations

at Simla, the British were prepared to recognise Chinese suzerainty over Tibet only as a part of a bargain involving specific undertakings by the Chinese. Until the Chinese gave those undertakings by accepting the whole convention, they could not take advantage of the recognition of their suzerainty which the Tibetans had continually and resolutely refused to acknowledge. Probably the British also wanted to secure what the Tibetans wanted, that is Tibetan autonomy without serving an ultimatum to the Chinese. The Chinese Government, however, parried this approach on various excuses.

The Dalai Lama was informed of these developments but was not told about the unconditional British recognition of Chinese suzerainty. If he had been told of this, the Dalai Lama would have raised violent objections. The British were trying to keep in the good books of both Tibet and China. After this, the British Government supplied some more arms to the Tibetans on the understanding that these would not be used for any provocative and aggressive acts, which guarantee the Dalai Lama readily gave. Some officers and men of the Tibetan army were given military training; a telegraph line was constructed from Gyantse to Lhasa; a geological survey was conducted in some parts of Tibet at the instance of the Dalai Lama; help was given for procuring a small hydro-electric plant at Lhasa; and a Sikkimese Officer from Darjeeling was sent to Lhasa to organise a police force.

These changes represented a considerable broadening of outlook and the possession of a reasonable supply of modern arms strengthened the confidence of the Tibetan Government. On the other side, disunity continued in China; but in spite of the low prestige of the central government its chauvinistic spirit prevailed. It would have been easy for the Dalai Lama at this time to recover some of the territories which Chao Erh-feng had occupied, but he stood by his word and made no move to that effect.

Earlier a serious tension had cropped up between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. The Panchen Lama had been raised to a semi-independent position by the Manchu Emperors to counterbalance the Dalai Lama. But the third and the fourth

Panchen Lamas, to whom the Chinese Emperor had offered large territories, were not deceived and kept their jurisdiction within modest limits and they acknowledged the Dalai Lama as the supreme temporal power in Tibet. But due to the long period when the Dalai Lama was ineffective, and Tibet was being ruled by a Regent, there had been a certain amount of administrative independence on the part of the Panchen Lama, particularly because the Panchen Lamas were usually long-lived and were highly respected. The thirteenth Dalai Lama tried to put an end to this state of affairs but met with stout resistance from the sixth Panchen Lama and more particularly from his retinue. When the Dalai Lama fled his country in 1904, the Chinese offered to make the Panchen Lama the Regent; the latter, however, did not agree. But this possibility of the Panchen Lama being used against him made the Dalai Lama further hostile and sharpened the conflict between the two. But the dispute remained unsolved as the Dalai Lama had to run away to Darjeeling when the Chinese invaded Tibet. When he returned, he asked the Panchen Lama to pay for the upkeep of the army, but the latter would not agree. Though the personal relationship between the two was not bad, it was unfortunate that they hardly ever met and some of the Lamas surrounding the Panchen Lama contributed to the deterioration of the relationship by insisting on the independence of the Tashilhunpo area. The Panchen Lama asked the British to intervene, but the latter would not do it as it was supposed to be an internal matter of Tibet. Ultimately he fled Tibet in 1923 and took refuge in China. This was the greatest prize that the Chinese had secured by getting under their control the only figure in Tibet whom they could counterpose against the Dalai Lama. Thereafter the possibility of the Panchen Lama's return to Tibet with the backing of the Chinese Army remained a constant source of anxiety for the Tibetan Government.

By 1925 there was a thaw in the British relations with Tibet. The chief reason was that the British were unable to obtain the concurrence of the Chinese to the Simla Convention and so they lost interest in it and left the Tibetans to secure whatever agreement they could. The Simla Convention had broken down

only on the question of Tibet's eastern frontier. The other agreements in the Convention regarding British trade relations and the posting of British Trade Agents as well as the delineation of the Indo-Tibetan border had not been questioned by the Chinese. Hence the British were not particularly concerned about the final boundary between Tibet and China so long as Tibet's internal autonomy and its boundary with India were maintained. The other reason was that the Dalai Lama had tried to go a bit too fast in his attempt to modernise Tibet. In doing so he had necessarily given more responsibility to the lay officials. This was resented by the monasteries who apprehended an encroachment on their own powers. The Dalai Lama could not ignore their opinion. So he had to scrap some of the innovations which he had introduced with the help of the British.

During the period 1925 to 1930, two Chinese missions came to Lhasa to negotiate a formal settlement. Though the missions were received with respect by the Dalai Lama, he was quite firm in his demand that Tibet should be treated as an independent country in close diplomatic relations with China. In reply to the Chinese offer of giving practical assistance to Tibet, the Dalai Lama requested for a supply of arms, which the Chinese would not give. The Chinese also suggested the return of the Panchen Lama; the Dalai Lama was prepared to consider it on his own terms, which categorically excluded the Panchen Lama's Tibetan entourage and the Chinese armed escort. The Dalai Lama wanted to be friendly with both Britain and China and in a testament which he wrote in 1931, he declared the basic principle of his policy which was to maintain friendly relations with Britain and China, both of whom had powerful armies.

Tibet was to face some more trouble, which again gave the British the opportunity to come closer to Tibet. The first was the deterioration of relations with Nepal in which the British successfully mediated. But the more serious problem was the attempt of the Chinese warlords in Szechwan to grab all the Tibetan territory which Chao Erh-feng had conquered between 1905 and 1910 and which the Tibetans had liberated in 1918. At first the Tibetans defeated the Chinese and drove the latter as far as

Tachienlu. Then a truce was signed. But the Chinese, as soon as they recovered their strength, attacked the Tibetans and forced them back and recovered practically all the ground that they had lost. They even threatened to enter Outer Tibet. The Dalai Lama then asked the Government of India for help and also intervention at Nanking. The matter was taken up by the British Government and ultimately Tibet had to give up everything to the east of Yangtse but kept in its possession the entire area west of the river, including the Yekalo district, which had long remained a Chinese enclave.

The thirteenth Dalai Lama died in 1933 and again a period of Regent's rule followed. The first Regent selected was the Lama of Reting, a young and rather inexperienced person. The Chinese Nationalist Government seized this opportunity for effecting a re-entry into Tibet, and sent a strong mission with a wireless set led by General Huang ostensibly to carry condolences. The Government of India, getting suspicious of the Chinese move, also sent an officer from the Political Department to keep watch on Chinese activities Huang, who at first professed that he had come only to offer condolences, made a good impression by his courteous behaviour; but later started discussions on the long-standing frontier dispute. In the course of these discussions, Huang finally showed his hand and demanded that Tibet should be subordinate to China, that it should cease to have direct relations with other foreign countries, that the Chinese Government should be consulted before the appointment of high ranking Tibetan officials, and that the Panchen Lama should be allowed to return to Tibet. In reply, the Tibetan Government affirmed that they were willing to acknowledge Chinese suzerainty on the conditions laid down in the 1914 Convention that they would continue to conduct their own foreign affairs and maintain their relationship with the British Government, and that as a token of friendship they would inform the Chinese Government of the appointments of their high officials after these had been made. They also maintained that the British Government would be a party to any agreement reached between Tibet and China. As regards the Panchen Lama, the Tibetan Government agreed that he could

return, provided he did not bring an armed Chinese escort with him. When finally Huang departed from Tibet, he left two liaison officers with a wireless set. So General Huang's visit was successful in one respect in that he succeeded in re-establishing a Chinese mission in Tibet after over twenty years. This mission gradually turned into a regular diplomatic mission. Through it the Chinese Government started making regular payments to a number of Tibetan officials from the Regent downwards, who accepted them as personal gifts.

But soon a dispute arose between Nanking and Lhasa over the return of the Panchen Lama. The dispute was not so much over the Panchen Lama holding autonomous authority over the three districts round Tashilhunpo but his being accompanied by a Chinese escort which, in other words, would mean the reintroduction of Chinese troops inside Tibet after nearly two decades. On a request from the Tibetan Government, the British Government made a representation to the Chinese in 1935 opposing the sending of troops to Lhasa. During this period of dispute, a British mission under Sir Basil Gould went to Tibet to allay the fears of the Tibetan Government. When Gould returned to Sikkim, he left H.E. Richardson behind as a Liaison Officer with a wireless set. This was a counter to the Chinese Office left behind by General Huang. At this time, therefore, three independent countries—Great Britain, China and Nepal—had their diplomatic representatives at Lhasa. In 1937, the Chinese Government moved the Panchen Lama to Trashi Gompha on the Tibetan border. As the Tibetan Government apprehended that China was trying to introduce the Panchen Lama by force, a mobilisation of Tibetan troops was ordered. By then China herself was much too preoccupied with the Japanese invasion of the mainland and, finding Tibet determined to resist, gave up any further attempt to force the Panchen Lama on Tibet. Lhasa then in a mood of generosity wrote to the Panchen Lama to come back to Tashilhunpo and even agreed to his bringing a small escort. But the Panchen Lama did not come and instead moved to Jyekundo, where in December, 1937, he died. So the issue of the Panchen Lama's return to Lhasa

ceased to be a live one for the time being.

The new incarnation of the Dalai Lama was found in Amdo in 1939. Steps that were taken to test the genuineness of this find, his detention by the Chinese Governor of Amdo in order to extort a large sum of money, his final departure for Lhasa, his arrival in procession in the country and his installation on the throne in February, 1940, have all been vividly described in his book *My Land and My People* by the fourteenth Dalai Lama and so no purpose would be served by repeating these details. It is, however, worth mentioning that when the procession with the re-incarnation approached Lhasa, the first foreign representative to welcome him was of the British Government and the representatives of Nepal, Bhutan and China came later. The British sent a special representative in the person of Sir Basil Gould to attend the installation ceremony and similarly the Chinese sent a high-ranking officer, Wu Chung-hsin. At the installation ceremony the British and the Chinese representatives were given equal position. The Chinese Government in order to put in a claim to its suzerainty issued a decree in February, 1940, recognising the child as the fourteenth Dalai Lama. There was no need for this as the Tibetans had already accepted him. Wu succeeded in consolidating and improving the Chinese foot-hold in Lhasa started by the earlier Huang mission. He succeeded in obtaining expressions of Tibetan sympathy for the Chinese in their war against Japan. He also managed to pass a good deal of money to the Regent and in subverting the Che College of the Sera monastery. The Tibetans grew suspicious and the Regent, Reting Rimpoche, became very unpopular and even monks started criticising him for playing into the hands of the Chinese. Ultimately he was forced to resign in 1941 and an elderly conservative Lama, Taktra Rimpoche, was elected in his place.

However, for the next few years, uneasy peace prevailed in Tibet. China was then riven by internal dissensions. The Communists after their long march had established themselves firmly in N.W. China. Predatory warlords were still holding out in their respective areas professing nominal allegiance to the Central Government. Japan was in possession of Manchuria and

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was making steady inroads into the Chinese mainland. So the Chinese National Government was too preoccupied to intervene actively in Tibetan affairs, though it maintained its diplomatic posture as a sovereign. But that Tibet was effectively independent was proved by another important development that took place in 1942-45, during World War II. The Japanese had sealed off all the Chinese sea-ports and so it was essential for China to have an overland route to get the much needed military supplies from Britain and America and this was possible only through Tibet. In spite of repeated persuasions by the British, the Tibetan Government declared its neutrality in the war between China and Japan and refused to allow any military supplies to pass through its territory. In those days the British and the Americans were also fighting against the Japanese on the borders of Assam and Bengal and in the Pacific Ocean and it was very much to their interest that military supplies reached the Chinese forces who were hard pressed by the Japanese. Even in such circumstances, the British accepted the Tibetans' right to declare their neutrality and to refuse to allow a route for the passage of military supplies. This was a clear illustration of the sovereign rights which Tibet exercised at the time. If Tibet was politically a part of China, its declaration of neutrality in the life and death struggle of the Chinese with the Japanese and the closing of its doors to the passage of military supplies could not have taken place. When the Chinese, in order to enforce their right to have a route through Tibet, made an armed incursion into Chinghai, the British protested to their allies, the Chinese, against such action. In reply to a Chinese question to clarify the British position *vis-a-vis* Tibet, Sir Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Minister, wrote in 1943 to the Chinese Foreign Minister, T.V. Soong, that Tibet had enjoyed *de facto* independence since 1911, and that the British Government was always prepared to recognise Chinese suzerainty over Tibet but only on an understanding that Tibet was regarded as autonomous. The effect of the Chinese incursion in Chinghai was that the Tibetans asked the British for further military training of their troops and more supply of arms. At this time the United States Government made

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a present of several wireless transmitters which were needed to speed up communications between Lhasa and the eastern frontier. All these were seen by the Chinese as signs of Tibet making new friends in foreign countries. To offset these influences, Chiang Kai-shek sent his adviser, Shen Tsung-lien, to Lhasa in the summer of 1944 to find a settlement of the Tibetan problem. During the negotiations, the Tibetan Government made no sweeping concessions. Shen has mentioned in his book that since 1911 Lhasa had enjoyed full independence for all practical purposes. The Tibetans resented it when, on the Victory Day, Shen organised a parade and displayed a large number of Chinese flags. However, Shen scored two significant successes. Firstly he managed to subvert the Che College of the Sera monastery, which became openly critical of the Regent; and secondly, he persuaded the Tibetan Government to send an official delegation to China. Though the purpose of this delegation was left undefined, the Chinese Government's intention was that this delegation should attend the Chinese National Assembly to be held in Nanking in May, 1946, so that Tibet could then be shown as being a part of China, having taken part in its National Assembly and the election of the President. Though the British mission warned the Tibetan Government against the possible trap, the latter was confident of its ability to out-manoeuvre the Chinese and the delegation was asked to press before the National Assembly the return to Tibet of the provinces seized by China in 1931. The delegation was feted lavishly in China, sent on a round of sightseeing and detained in spite of the protests of the Tibetan Government when the date of the National Assembly was postponed. In the meantime, the Chinese press went on propagating that the delegation had come to take part in the proceedings of the National Assembly. Quite innocent of the conduct of foreign affairs, the Tibetan Government turned a blind eye on all this propaganda and was satisfied that its delegation had been told not to take part in the Assembly. The delegation, in fact, only watched the proceedings of the Chinese National Assembly but took no part in the debates and refused to sign the resolutions.

In early 1947, the conspiracy which the Chinese were hatching

with the Che College of the Sera monastery in favour of ex-Regent Reting Rimpoche and against Regent Taktra Rimpoche came to a head. An attempt was made by some of the monks of the Che College to kill the Regent and when this failed and Reting Rimpoche was arrested, sections of the Sera monastery practically went into rebellion killing the Abbot who tried to pacify the fighting groups. Matters came to a head and ultimately the Lhasa Government had to send troops and shell the monastery to bring the recalcitrant Lamas into submission. Though this was a minor internal trouble, it had important repercussions, because this was later used by the Chinese to show that the Tibetan Government did not represent the people and, therefore, should be overthrown.

Earlier, in 1942, a new Panchen Lama had been recognised by the Chinese Government. This was an unprecedented step because the Panchen Lamas had invariably to be recognised by the Dalai Lama or the Regent and the Tibetan National Assembly. So the Tibetan Government declined to recognise the new claimant. An attempt was made before the Reting Conspiracy to bring the Panchen Lama into Tibet, but the Tibetan Government's reaction was spirited and so the matter was allowed to rest.

In July, 1947, on the eve of Indian Independence, formal statements were made by the British and the Indian Governments to the Tibetan Government, informing the latter of the transfer of power. The Tibetan Government was told that British obligations and rights under the existing treaties with Tibet would thereafter devolve upon the successor Indian Government and hope was expressed that the Tibetan Government would continue with the Indian Government the same relations as had formerly existed with the British. The Tibetan Government acknowledged the message but did not send a formal reply. When India gained her independence, the Tibetan Government suddenly made a vague claim on large parts of Indian territory. From the nature of the claim, it was quite clear that the Tibetan Government did not even know the geographical limits of the territories claimed or where they lay. It was felt that this claim was made only to counterbalance the claim which it had made against the Chinese Government for return of the Chinese-held territories. But the

position *vis-a-vis* India was quite different, because India held no part of Tibetan territory and the McMahon Line was a properly negotiated boundary between India and Tibet, whereas the Chinese had refused to accept the McMahon boundary of Inner and Outer Tibet. In its reply, the Indian Government expressed the hope that, as the Indian Government was a successor government to the British, the previous relations as with the British Government should continue, and that any discussions about new agreements could be taken up later. The Tibetan Government eventually announced its agreement to the continuance of the former relationship with the new Indian Government. But this unfounded and ill-advised claim made by the Tibetan Government not only resulted in the temporary loss of a certain amount of Indian sympathy for Tibet but also gave an excuse to the Chinese subsequently to bolster their claims on large parts of Indian territory.

Two other events took place which were important from the Tibetan point of view. On the eve of Indian Independence when a Convention of the Asian countries was held in Delhi in 1947, the Tibetan flag flew amongst the flags of other independent nations. Though, on the objection of the Chinese, a map showing Tibet as separate from China was withdrawn, yet the Tibetan delegation sat there in token of the independence of their territory. In 1948, a trade delegation from Tibet visited India, China, France, Italy, Great Britain and the USA and Tibetan passports issued to the delegates were accepted by the governments of these countries.

Tibet, therefore, enjoyed *de facto* independence from 1912 to 1950 when the Chinese Communists invaded the country. That status was analysed in detail by the International Commission of Jurists and in its report on "The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law" in 1959 the Commission came to the following conclusion:

> "Tibet's position on the expulsion of the Chinese in 1912 can be fairly described as one of *de facto* independence and there are, as explained, strong legal grounds for thinking that any form of legal subservience to China had vanished. It is, therefore, submitted that the events of 1911-12 mark

the re-emergence of Tibet as a fully sovereign State, independent in fact and in law of Chinese control."

The Tibetans have nothing in common with the Chinese—neither language, nor traditions, nor outlook, nor psychological make-up. The Tibetans, no doubt, have learnt some things from the Chinese in respect of their ceremonials, their craftsmanship and some of their artistic styles; but Tibetan culture is a spiritual creation of Buddhism and hence of India. Tibet, without any doubt, is the homeland of a distinct and ancient nation. For many centuries it enjoyed a relationship of mutual respect with China. It is true that there were times when China was strong and Tibet was weak, and China invaded Tibet; but, looking further back into history, there were also times when Tibet invaded China, defeated the Chinese armies and annexed large parts of Chinese territory. There is no basis whatsoever in history for the Chinese to claim that Tibet is a part of China.

II

Uneasy Peace

5 Red China Invades Tibet

WHEN IT BECAME clear that India was becoming independent, the Nationalist Government of China, thinking that the British would no longer be interested in the India-Tibet borders, sent a feeler to the latter in the form of a protest against the presence of Indian Government officials in NEFA. This was rejected on the ground that the area was within the accepted frontiers of India. Soon after India achieved independence, the protest was repeated with the new Government of India, but this was also rejected on the same grounds. The Nationalist Government then changed its approach and in 1948 suggested that the Tibetan Trade Regulations of 1908 were due for revision, ignoring the fact that these regulations had been superseded by the Simla Convention of 1914. After some delay, the Government of India replied that the Trade Regulations of 1908 were no longer valid, as these had been replaced by the Simla Convention of 1914. The Nationalist Government of China then challenged the validity of the Simla Convention, but before India could send a reply, that Government had fallen.

Towards the end of 1948 it was evident that the Kuomintang Government was on the run and that Mao Tse-tung's forces had gained the upper hand. On January 31, 1949, Mao's forces occupied Peking. Though the Nationalist Government had not moved from its wartime capital at Nanking to Peking after the withdrawal of the Japanese forces, there was no doubt that Peking was the traditional capital of China and its occupation by the Communist forces dealt a severe moral blow to the nationalists. News started coming in of large-scale desertions from the Nationalist to the Communist forces. Even whole armies changed sides overnight. In April, 1949, Nanking fell to the Communists and the Nationalist Government collapsed. It moved south

and then took shelter in Taiwan where it continues to this day. After the fall of Nanking, it was clear that the entry of the People's Liberation Army into Tibet was not far off.

In July, 1949, the Tibetan Government asked the Chinese Mission at Lhasa and some Chinese traders to leave Tibet and sent them out through India. The Tibetan Government apprehended that with the collapse of the Chinese Nationalist Government, the members of the Chinese Mission might transfer their allegiance to the Communist Government and the Tibetan Government would then be faced with an established Communist foothold in the country. Apprehending danger to their eastern frontier, the Tibetan Government also started military preparations, training more personnel and getting some supplies of arms. Their fears were confirmed when on September 10, 1949, the Peking Radio broadcast that the People's Liberation Army was ready to liberate Tibet, claimed that Tibet was Chinese territory and asserted that no foreign intervention would be tolerated. This was the first outright declaration by the Communist Government of its intention to liberate Tibet or, in other words, to invade and subjugate it.* On September 26, 1949, the Communists occupied Sinkiang and though the Indian Consulate continued to remain there for some time more, it could not function because the Chinese would not recognise it. On October 1, 1949, the establishment of the People's Republic of China was formally proclaimed. On November 24, 1949, Peking Radio broadcast a message of Mao Tse-tung encouraging the people of Tibet to overthrow the rule of the Dalai Lama. It was obvious that the Communists were still hoping for a recurrence of the revolt which had taken place in 1947 in the Sera monastery to overthrow the Regent and re-establish the ex-Regent, Reting Rimpoche, who was known to be pro-Chinese. On December 30, 1949, after the Nationalist Government had moved to Taiwan, India recognised the Communist Government of China. In May, 1950, K.M.

* The Chinese Communist Party in one of the Party Congresses held in the 'thirties had given out its intention to liberate Tibet. So the Communist Government's decision was in keeping with the Party line.

Panikkar took over as India's ambassador to Communist China and was received with a show of friendship and cordiality.

The Chinese then started building up their forces in the Sikang and Chinghai provinces bordering Tibet. Broadcasts came on the air quite often about the Chinese intention and the readiness of the People's Liberation Army to liberate Tibet and also encouraging the Tibetans to revolt against the autocratic rule of the Dalai Lama. Though the revolt did not materialise, the Tibetan Government was naturally alarmed at these broadcasts and military training was carried on extensively and all young officials, both monk and lay, were given arms. The Tibetan Government also decided to send missions to India, Nepal, the United Kingdom and the United States to explain Tibet's case and to ask for help. In addition, a mission was also chosen to go to China to make an attempt to come to an agreement with the new regime. Unfortunately, only the missions to India and Nepal reached their destinations because the United Kingdom and the United States showed no enthusiasm to receive such missions. The team chosen for Peking also ran into difficulties in India, because the British Government was unwilling to receive the mission at Hong Kong and would not issue entry visas. The Tibetans had no other alternative but to stay on in India, where they met the Chinese Communist Ambassador, who had by then taken over. At various meetings the Ambassador insisted that the party should go to China before the end of September. It was clear that something serious was going to happen in October.

India's prompt recognition of Communist China and withdrawal of recognition of the Chiang Kai-shek regime in Taiwan did not evoke any favourable response from China. Both these actions of the Government of India were taken for granted and derogatory criticisms continued to appear in the Chinese Press accusing India of being a tool of Anglo-American imperialism and of aiding imperialist designs for the annexation of Tibet. About Pandit Nehru who, from the very beginning, had tried to befriend China, the Radio even said, "into his slavish and bourgeois reactionary character has now been instilled the beastly ambition of aggression"! Pandit Nehru's initiative in calling an

Asian conference to discuss the Indonesian problem *vis-a-vis* the Dutch was described as an attempt to form a South-East Asian alliance. Even the recognition of Communist China was depicted as a hypocritical act on the part of Pandit Nehru to deceive the progressive Indian people. Communist China apparently apprehended that India might come in her way of annexing Tibet, and so started this offensive by indulging in false and tendentious propaganda questioning the motive behind even the most transparently honest efforts at international cooperation and peace, thus putting India on the defensive from the beginning.

In the last week of June, 1950, conflict broke out in Korea with the North Koreans crossing the frontier then known as the 38th Parallel. In the Security Council, North Korea was declared the aggressor and the United States of America was authorised to enforce the sanctions by sending troops. For the first few weeks everything seemed to go in favour of the North Koreans who had overrun the major part of South Korea and the South Korean troops were only holding a sector round Pusan with their backs to the sea. The situation, however, changed dramatically when the American troops landed at Inchong in the month of September. The North Korean offensive collapsed and the whole of South Korea up to the 38th Parallel was freed. This led to a severe reaction in China and large-scale movement of Chinese troops to Manchuria started. On October 2, 1950, Chou En-lai, in a midnight interview with the Indian Ambassador, whilst thanking Pandit Nehru profusely for all that he had done in the cause of peace, clearly indicated that if the Americans crossed the 38th Parallel, China would intervene in Korea. On October 8, the United Nations authorised the Allied Commander MacArthur to cross the 38th Parallel to bring about the unification of Korea. Prime Minister Nehru continued his efforts to bring peace in Korea and to nullify the U.N. Resolution authorising the United States to cross the frontier.

Thus whilst India and her Ambassador were engaged with the problem of Korea and Chou En-lai was outwardly effusive about Pandit Nehru's efforts to advocate China's cause in the United Nations and for the establishment of peace, and whilst

Ambassador Panikkar glowed in the thought that diplomatically he was securing a victory by carrying the Chinese along with him, the Chinese quietly moved into Tibet to implement their predetermined plan. The Indian Ambassador knew nothing about it. Panikkar has mentioned in his book, *In Two Chinas*, that "by the middle of the month (October, 1950) rumours of a Chinese invasion of Tibet began to circulate. Visits and representations to the Foreign Office brought no results. The Foreign Office officials were polite but silent. Things were certainly moving on that side. The only information I was able to wring out of them was that certain pacificatory measures were being taken in West Sikang, that is on the borders of Tibet proper". Actually the Chinese confirmed their moves on October 25 by announcing on the Peking Radio that the process of liberating Tibet had begun.

On October 7, 1950, the Chinese launched an attack on Eastern Tibet and quickly occupied Chamdo and defeated and slaughtered or captured most of the Tibetan troops, including Governor Ngapo Shape. Two messengers came from Ngapo to Lhasa to tell the Dalai Lama and the Cabinet that he was a prisoner and to seek their authority to negotiate terms for peace and also to convey to the Cabinet an assurance from the Chinese Commander that China would not extend her rule over more of Tibetan territory. At the time the Chinese were attacking Eastern Tibet, a Chinese force from Hotien, moving south from Keriya, was progressing along the old silk route passing about 100 miles east of Ladakh into western Tibet. For a long time it was bogged down in the northern approaches and it reached Gargunsa in June, 1951. There was no opposition as there were no Tibetan troops in this region.

When the Chinese attacked Chamdo, Tibet asked for India's mediation in the same way as she had asked for British mediation in 1909 and 1931. Even before the invasion, alarmed at the repeated Chinese assertion of their determination to liberate Tibet, India, through her Ambassador, had made several verbal representations to the Chinese Government to settle the Tibetan question peacefully and had been assured by the Chinese Govern-

ment of their peaceful intentions. The Government of India had also acquainted the Chinese Government of India's long-standing rights in Tibet. The Chinese Government had always assured the Indian Ambassador that the "liberation" would be by peaceful methods.

When the news of the Chinese attack on eastern Tibet trickled in, the Government of India sent a protest note to the Chinese Government on October 21, 1950, against military measures being taken in Tibet. The Indian note pointed out that when the case of China's entry in the United Nations was pending before the General Assembly, it would be against China's interest to take military measures in Tibet. This would queer the pitch for those nations, including India, who were doing their best to get China admitted.

When the reports of the Chinese invasion of eastern Tibet were confirmed, the Government of India sent another protest note on October 28, 1950. The note explained the causes for the delay in the Tibetan delegation reaching Peking, and stated that the delegation had remained in Delhi because of the desire of the Peking Government that negotiations should at first be held in Delhi with the Chinese Ambassador. The note also repudiated the Chinese allegation that the delegation had been held up in India due to foreign influences. The note then stressed that "in the present context of world events, the invasion by Chinese troops can only be regarded as deplorable, and in the considered judgment of the Government of India not in the interest of China or peace. The Government of India can only express their deep regret that in spite of friendly and disinterested advice repeatedly tendered by them, the Chinese Government should have decided to seek the solution of the problem of their relations with Tibet by force instead of by the slower and more enduring method of peaceful approaches".

To this the Chinese replied on October 30, 1950, stressing that China would like to make it clear that "Tibet is an integral part of the Chinese territory. The problem of Tibet is entirely the domestic problem of China. The Chinese People's Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people and defend

the frontiers of China. This is the firm policy of the Central People's Government". Whilst welcoming the Tibetan delegation to China, Peking asserted that whatever might be the outcome of the negotiations which were yet to be opened, China could not deviate from her position that "the problem of Tibet remains a domestic problem of the People's Republic of China and no foreign interference would be tolerated". The note also maintained that the problem of Tibet and the question of China's entry in the UN were two different matters and had no bearing on each other The Chinese even went on to allege that the Indian Government's viewpoint that the Chinese attempt to liberate Tibet was deplorable reflected foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet.

The Government of India sent another note on October 31, 1950, in reply to the Chinese note of October 30. Rebutting the allegation of any foreign influences working on the Indian Government in its attitude towards Tibet and also the allegation that foreign influence was responsible for delaying the departure of the Tibetan delegation for Peking, the Government of India stated that it earnestly desired a peaceful settlement of the Tibetan problem "by peaceful negotiations adjusting the legitimate Tibetan claim to autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty". India questioned the justification of the military operations because Tibet posed no threat to China and was not guilty of any armed provocations. "Such a step, involving an attempt to impose a decision by force, cannot be reconciled with a peaceful settlement. In view of these developments, the Government of India are not in a position to advise the Tibetan delegation to leave for Peking unless the Chinese Government halt the advance of their troops into Tibet." The Government of India also said that it had no political or territorial ambitions in Tibet, nor did it seek any privileged position in that country. At the same time it pointed out that certain rights had grown out of usage and agreements which were natural between neighbours with close cultural and commercial relations. About the Trade Agencies in Lhasa, Gyantse and Yatung which had been in existence for over forty years, the Government of India hoped that these would

continue. It stated that it was India's basic policy to work for friendly relations with China but regretted that recent developments in Tibet had not only prejudiced these relations but also the interests of peace all over the world. In the end, the Government of India again urged that instead of a solution under duress and by force the Chinese Government should adopt the method of peaceful negotiations.

In its reply on November 16, 1950, the Chinese Government again asserted that Tibet was an integral part of China and reiterated its firm intention to liberate that country. It also clarified that whatever autonomy was granted to the national minorities (i.e. including the Tibetans) would be an autonomy within the confines of Chinese sovereignty. Alleging that the Government of India had also acknowledged China's sovereign rights, the Chinese expressed surprise that when they wanted to exercise these rights by liberating the Tibetan people (from whom they did not explain) and driving out foreign forces (which were non-existent except the Indian armed guards at the Trade Agencies) and influences (it could be only Indian influence) to ensure that the Tibetan people would be free from aggression, the Indian Government should try to obstruct the exercise of these sovereign rights. The Chinese also said that as early as August 31, 1950, they had informed the Indian Ambassador that the Chinese People's Liberation Army was going to take action in West Sikang, and this was the reason why the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi was insisting that the Tibetan delegation should reach China before the end of September; but on various pretexts and due to outside instigation this delegation had continued to remain in India. Therefore, the Chinese Government could no longer delay the set plan of the Chinese People's Liberation Army to proceed to Tibet. The Chinese Government then regretted that the Government of India, disregarding Tibet as a domestic problem of China, had tried to make it out as an international dispute and alleged that this would increase the tensions in the world. Referring to India's assurance of developing Sino-Indian friendship on the basis of mutual respect of territory, sovereignty and equality, the note argued that "the entry into Tibet of the Chinese People's

Liberation Army is exactly aimed at the protection of the integrity of the territory and the sovereignty of China, and it is on these questions that all those countries who desire to respect the territory and the sovereignty of China should first of all indicate their real attitude towards China". In other words, China bluntly declared that unless India agreed to the Chinese Liberation Army entering and liberating Tibet, it would not be considered to be a friendly country. But even before the receipt in Delhi of the Chinese reply, the Chinese Ambassador at Delhi had, on behalf of his Government, refused to recognise the legitimacy of the Indian Mission in Lhasa and the Trade Agencies at Yatung and Gyantse and the existence of military escorts as these violated Chinese sovereignty in Tibet.

The exchange of notes stopped here. The Chinese had made their position clear. Tibet was an integral part of China, the Tibetan problem was a domestic problem of China in which no foreign interference would be brooked. The People's Liberation Army would enter Tibet, liberate the people and protect China's frontiers (which were really Tibet's frontiers with India). Unless India acquiesced in this process of liberation, it would be considered to be a country hostile to China. So it was now up to India to decide what it should do to safeguard Tibet's autonomy. Its efforts at mediation had been completely rebuffed by the Chinese and its appeal to find a peaceful solution had been spurned as one made under foreign imperialist influence.

Whilst the exchange of notes between India and China was going on, Tibet requested India to sponsor her case in the United Nations but was informed that she should send her appeal direct. On November 7, 1950, a Tibetan delegation staying at Kalimpong sent a telegram to the United Nations asking for protection against the armed invasion of Tibet by China. Tracing the history of Tibet from the earliest times and taking its stand on the Simla Convention of 1914, where Tibet accepted nominal Chinese suzerainty conditionally, the representation went on to say, "The armed invasion of Tibet for the incorporation of Tibet in Communist China through sheer physical force is a clear case of aggression. As long as the people of Tibet are

compelled by force to become a part of China against their will and consent, the present invasion of Tibet will be the grossest instance of the violation of the weak by the strong. The problem is simple. The Chinese claim Tibet as a part of China. Tibetans feel that racially, culturally and geographically they are far apart from the Chinese. If the Chinese find the reactions of the Tibetans to their unnatural claim not acceptable, there are other civilised methods by which they could ascertain the views of the people of Tibet. Or, should the issue be purely juridical, they are open to seek redress in an international court of law."

But the response from the United Nations was extremely cool. El Salvador was the only country which wanted the General Assembly to take action against this act of unprovoked aggression. Either as a result of the representation made by the Government of India or because Tibet's case was coming up before the General Assembly and this tell-tale aggression might go against China's case for entry in the UN, the Chinese forces stopped their further advance into Tibet and made a show of settling the matter by negotiations. By this manoeuvre China successfully hoodwinked the UN. On November 24, when the General Assembly considered this question, the British delegate argued that, as the legal position of Tibet was not clear, it would be better if the matter was allowed to wait till the Assembly had a better idea of the possibilities of a peaceful settlement. The Indian representative declared that he did not want to express an opinion on the difficulties which had arisen between China and Tibet except that the Tibetan Government had not abandoned its hopes of settling these difficulties by peaceful means and that as the Chinese forces had ceased to advance after the fall of Chamdo, he was hopeful that a peaceful settlement would recognise the autonomy which Tibet had enjoyed for several decades whilst maintaining its historical association with China. Both Russia and Nationalist China supported the British proposal and so the Assembly deferred any further discussion. Tibet was, therefore, left with no other alternative but to carry on direct negotiations with China and see what concessions it could get to ensure its autonomy. It was a negotiation between a lamb and a tiger and

the result was a foregone conclusion.

Finding no other alternative, the Tibetan Government then authorised Ngapo Shapé to conduct negotiations with China. In the meantime, the delegation which had been delayed in India also arrived in China. The negotiations started in April, 1951, and ended on May 23, 1951, when a Sino-Tibetan Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet was signed. This Agreement was based on the assumption that Tibet was a part of China. It stated that for over one hundred years imperialist forces had penetrated into China and Tibet and, therefore, the Liberation Army had been ordered to march into Tibet to eliminate such forces and influences, so that the Tibetan people could unite and drive out the imperialist aggressors and return to the big family of the motherland—the People's Republic of China. The main points in the agreement, which seemed at least superficially to safeguard Tibetan autonomy, were that the Central Government would not alter the existing political system in Tibet or the status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama; would protect the established religious customs and institutions; and would not compel the Tibetan authorities to carry out reforms. But Tibet was to come under unified central control which would include the integration of the Tibetan armed forces in the Chinese Army and the appointment of a Military and Administrative Committee at Lhasa to implement the Agreement. The Agreement also provided for the unrestricted entry of Chinese troops into Tibet and the establishment of a civil and military headquarters at Lhasa. Ngapo Shapé did not refer the terms of the Pact to the Tibetan Government for the latter's prior approval. There was no doubt that he was threatened and cajoled to sign it. But even if he had refused to sign the Pact or the Tibetan Government had disowned it, the result would have been no different. The People's Liberation Army would have liberated Tibet—peacefully if possible, with force if necessary.

Thus Tibet lost the autonomy which she had enjoyed for centuries and which had developed into an almost independent status since 1912. It was a slap in the face for India, the country next to China which had the largest interest in Tibet and

which had at this time the longest unbroken diplomatic representation in Lhasa. The irony of it is that all this time India was working hard in the United Nations and the Security Council, with the British Government and the Afro-Asian groups, to seat China in the United Nations and the Security Council, to get the Americans to withdraw their protection over Taiwan and to negotiate peace in Korea, which would also be helpful to the Chinese. Panikkar in his book, *In Two Chinas*, does not mention that he maintained a watching brief on the Chinese negotiations with the Tibetan plenipotentiaries. Probably he was too busy acting as a broker between the Western countries and China over Korea and Taiwan. Presumably if he had shown any interest in the Tibetan negotiations, the Chinese would have promptly accused him of interfering in their internal affairs. All that Panikkar seemed to have got out of the Chinese before he left Peking in June, 1952, was a recognition from Chou En-lai of the legitimacy of India's trade and cultural interests in Tibet, but the price paid was heavy as will be seen in a later Chapter.

The Indian Government had given indication that it no longer regarded the 1914 Agreement as valid in all respects. The Sino-Tibetan Pact of 1951 did not exclude the continuation of special contact between India and Tibet, and so India's legitimate interests in Tibet could yet be safeguarded. If implemented with a liberal and statesmanlike outlook, the Pact would mean nothing more than the establishment of a Chinese protectorate of the kind which had existed before 1911. The reaction of the monks in general was not unfavourable because the Pact had promised the protection of religion and the monasteries. The British Government also expressed the view on June 6, that the Agreement purported to guarantee Tibetan autonomy, though there were grave doubts about the value of the guarantee.

However, subsequent events showed that behind all this facade of goodwill and reasonableness there was the sinister intention of completely subjugating Tibet and not only making it an integral part of China, which it never had been in the past, but also of changing the composition of the population, so that Tibet was for ever to lose her personality. And all this was to be achie-

ved through coercion and terror. The Chinese were waiting for this Agreement, which legally authorised them to bring an unrestricted number of troops into Tibet. Without it they might have to face another resolution in the United Nations. It not only silenced India, which had from the beginning urged peaceful negotiations, but blunted any adverse comments in the United Nations.

While the negotiations were going on, the Dalai Lama, though then only sixteen years of age, had, according to the wishes of the Tibetan National Assembly, taken over power and had also moved to Yatung on the Indian borders with the idea of taking shelter, if necessary, in Indian territory if the Chinese troops advanced any further into Tibet. He was following the precedent created by his predecessor, the thirteenth Dalai Lama. An unofficial Tibetan Office was opened in Kalimpong for facilitating correspondence with the United Nations and other countries including India.

Things remained in a state of suspended animation till July, 1952, when General Chang Ching-wu, the newly appointed Commissioner and Administrator of Civil and Military Affairs in Tibet, travelled through India and met the Dalai Lama at Yatung. He then proceeded to Lhasa and at his request the Dalai Lama soon followed him there. Immediately after this, the Chinese military occupation of Tibet was swiftly and smoothly carried out. At first 3,000 officers and men of the Chinese Army marched into Tibet. Thereafter another force of the same size arrived with their two Generals, Chang Kuo-hua and Tan Kuan-san. More troops were drafted and distributed at key points all over Tibet. Troops had already come from Sinkiang into the Ari region of Western Tibet. The work of developing communications with China along the two main routes via Chamdo and Nagchuka was taken up with great energy and claimed a heavy toll of Tibetan lives.

The Chinese had declared that the People's Liberation Army had a set plan to liberate Tibet, and in this they were not lying. Mao Tse-tung had initially encouraged the Tibetan people to revolt and overthrow the Dalai Lama's Government. This would have been the most desirable way of liberating Tibet. But it did

not happen. The next step that was taken was to attack the eastern frontier of Tibet and destroy the Tibetan Armed Forces completely. This was done also in order to judge the reactions of the so-called imperialists, including India. If a violent protest had been made, China could have taken the plea that she had only re-occupied that part of Inner Tibet which the Dalai Lama's Government had illegally occupied under British instigation in 1931 when China was weak. At that time the question of China's admission to the United Nations was pending. China also wanted to gauge the reaction in that body. Everything turned out favourably for her. Excepting India, no other country protested; and even India was in no position to intervene militarily, and did not show any desire or sign of doing so. The British, who had long traditional relations with Tibet, showed no enthusiasm to come to Tibet's assistance even diplomatically. The USA was cool and would not go against Nationalist China's claim in the UN that Tibet was a part of China. Russia lent her powerful support to her ally the Chinese. So the United Nations shelved the Tibetan issue. China in this way forced Tibet to come to the negotiation table at Peking on her own terms. With a pistol directed at its head, the Tibetan delegation was forced to sign on the dotted line. No doubt, the pact promised a certain amount of autonomy, but, as subsequent events proved, this was only for the purpose of giving a certain legitimacy to the entry of Chinese troops in Tibet which would not provoke international repercussions. In this way the Chinese managed to outmanoeuvre every nation which might have been interested in Tibet.

According to this Pact, Tibet was deprived of any voice in foreign affairs. It was converted into a province of China. The latter could introduce as many troops as she liked or required in Tibet. She could take the necessary measures to facilitate defence. That would include construction of not only arterial roads from Sining and Gormo to Lhasa but also from Khotan (Hotien) to Western Tibet and subsidiary roads to India's frontier. That also included the stockpiling of grains by levy from the people, requisitioning houses and lands for quartering Chinese troops and eliminating the Tibetan army as a fighting force. Quite un-

mindful of the strain on Tibet's economy, China went on increasing her forces in Tibet till the strength reached the peak figure of fourteen divisions in 1962. All this roused no protest from any country in the world, and in the United Nations Tibet was conveniently forgotten. Further stages of the sinister plan to subjugate Tibet and eliminate the Tibetan personality were to unfold themselves in the course of the next few years.

6 Reactions in India

THE GOVERNMENT OF India's decision to recognise China's suzerainty over Tibet, its readiness to renounce unilaterally some of the treaty rights it had inherited from the British in Tibet and its refusal to intervene militarily to prevent Chinese entry into that country have often been criticised by persons in the hindsight of subsequent events. It has been claimed that we should have entered into a new treaty with Nationalist China before it was overthrown by the Communists to secure better terms for Tibet and even to guarantee its independence. It has also been argued that we should have followed Lord Curzon's example of 1904 and sent a military expedition into Tibet to thwart the Chinese. It has been urged that we should never have renounced the treaty rights which India had inherited in Tibet from the British. That these criticisms have persisted for such a long time and have been voiced by so many influential persons shows not only the measure of the people's indignation over the Chinese action in Tibet but also reveals the inadequate understanding of history and the realities of the situation as they existed at the time.

That the unprovoked aggression by big and powerful China on small and weak Tibet should rouse the indignation of the Indian people was natural and understandable. Tibet was a peaceful country and bore enmity towards none. The three million religious-minded Tibetans posed no danger to the six hundred millions of Chinese who at this time possessed a war machine second to none in its might. India, emerging from its subordination to centuries-old foreign rule, was naturally horrified at the sight of such a powerful country as China swallowing the handful of Tibetans instead of leaving them in peace and helping them to progress. There was therefore widespread criticism of the Chinese action in Indian newspapers, in public forums and

in Parliament. That Pandit Nehru had also been deeply hurt by the Chinese perfidy was evident from the anguished tone in which he replied to the debates in Parliament on December 6 and 7, 1950. He said that ever since the People's Government of China had started talking about the liberation of Tibet, India, through her Ambassador, had conveyed to China her own feelings about it and had expressed the hope that the matter would be settled peacefully. India had made it clear that it had no territorial or political ambitions in regard to Tibet but desired to preserve her relations with that country which were purely cultural and commercial. Without challenging Chinese suzerainty, India had also expressed the hope that Tibet would maintain the autonomy it had exercised for at least forty years. Unfortunately, the Chinese Government, whilst maintaining that they would settle the question peacefully, reiterated in every message that they were going to liberate Tibet. From whom they were going to liberate Tibet was not clear. On the one hand they said they were prepared for a peaceful solution; on the other, they talked persistently of liberation. When India had been led to believe that the matter would be settled peacefully, it was a shock to hear that Chinese armies were marching into Tibet. There could hardly be a war between China and Tibet. Tibet was in no position to wage war, and obviously Tibet was no threat to China.

Some people may say that it was all very well to shed pious tears after the sacrifice and ask what was done to prevent it from happening. Could not India have taken steps to consolidate Tibet's position internationally before the Communists came to power in China? These people seem to ignore the fact that the Simla Convention of 1914 had practically recognised the *de facto* independence of Tibet but under conditions of Chinese suzerainty. The only improvement in the status of Tibet which India could negotiate with Nationalist China was in the direction of complete independence. This, however, no Chinese government would accept considering the traditional Chinese posture towards Tibet. It should not be forgotten that it was the Republican Government of China which had originally refused to sign the Simla Convention of 1914. The Nationalist Government,

which was a successor to the Republican Government, had throughout the thirty years of its existence not only ignored that Convention but had also tried to secure its dominance over Tibet whenever the opportunity came its way. Even shortly before Indian independence became effective, the Nationalist Government had protested against the presence of Indian Government officials in NEFA hoping that the British Government, with waning interest in India, would not insist on its rights in NEFA any longer. The same protest was repeated with the Indian Government after independence. The Nationalist Government deliberately ignored the 1914 Convention when it asked for a revision or renewal of the 1908 Treaty, which was all in its favour. So it was too much to expect the Kuomintang Government, in the last few months of its existence, to relinquish the claim of Chinese sovereignty or suzerainty over Tibet—a claim which the Chinese had maintained for centuries—and thus give further ground for propaganda against it of subservience to the imperialists. Even the Chinese nationals residing in India started publishing at this time letters in the *China Review* challenging India's right to conduct trade directly with Tibet. Even now the Nationalist Government in Taiwan has not renounced its claim of Tibet being a part of mainland China which the Nationalists hope to re-conquer some day. Therefore, it is quite unrealistic to think that the new Indian Government could have secured from the Nationalist Government terms for Tibet which would be less favourable to China than the reality that existed at the time. China's attitude towards India had been that of a big brother. As Panikkar's book *The Two Chinas* shows, the Nationalist Government of China, even during the last months of its existence, considered itself to be superior to the new Government of India and assumed a patronising tone in its behaviour with the latter. In such conditions, if India had tried to formalise the existing situation by a new treaty, she would only have opened up the whole issue once again and even the McMahon Line, on which India had based her frontier, would have been called in question. Any unilateral recognition of Tibetan independence would have been condemned by all the nations in the Security Council and India would

have been accused of an ambition to grab Tibet. Also, such a declaration would have remained on paper only. Therefore, any criticism on this ground was not at all based on an objective reading of the facts of history.

As regards the treaty rights, it should be realised that they had been extorted by the then most powerful government in the world, the British, out of a very weak country like Tibet at a time when the latter's titular suzerain, China, was beset with internal troubles and external aggression and was in no position to put up any effective resistance. Moreover, Britain's Tibetan policy was then entirely based on its fears of Russian expansion in Central Asia. It was not that these treaties were executed with an eye to safeguard the interests of India; they had in view the overall international interest of the British Government. They were the outcome of imperialist policies and were forced on a weak country. Otherwise, such treaties would never have been accepted by an independent country of measurable strength. There had been much criticism of Britain's Tibet policy from Indian nationalist leaders of those days. India, which had for long struggled against British imperialism and had ultimately succeeded in gaining her independence, could not shut her eyes to these facts of history. Whereas these treaties, no doubt, gave some diplomatic and other benefits to her, India could not forget that they had been imposed by her powerful foreign rulers on a weak neighbour in furtherance not of India's interests but of their imperialist policy. Hence India would have been untrue to her professions of democracy and anti-imperialism if she had accepted them in toto and sought to maintain all these treaty rights. Some rights, such as of trade and visits of pilgrims, were of mutual interest and similarly the waiving of the passport system could be mutually agreed to. The opening of Consulates or Trade Agencies, however, are generally done on a reciprocal basis, and if India had a Consulate in Lhasa, Tibet or its suzerain, China, could also claim a Consulate in some place in India; but there were other extra-territorial rights which could never be conceded by any independent country. Therefore, when India told China that she had no desire to insist on all the treaty obligations, she

was taking a line which was consistent with her thinking as an Asian country for long subjected to European rule. Morally any other attitude would have been indefensible. Even legally the position was weak, because China, the suzerain, had never acknowledged the validity of the 1914 Convention which had brought these obligations into existence. India had not only stressed that her interests in Tibet were confined to trade and culture but had also maintained that certain obligations had grown out of usages and friendly relations between two neighbours and these India was anxious to protect. And it is only these rights that any country could expect to exercise in a neighbouring territory.

Much regret has been expressed at the fact that India did not militarily intervene in Tibet when the Chinese invaded it and the Younghusband expedition sent by Lord Curzon in 1904 has been cited to show what might have been done at that time to stop Chinese aggression. There is a basic fallacy in this approach. Curzon's expedition had not been directed against the Chinese but against the Tibetan Government. Even this action had at that time been severely criticised by Indian leaders as an imperialist outrage and had not even found favour with the British Government. It is an acknowledged fact that in the beginning of the twentieth century Great Britain was recognised as the most powerful country in the world. Chinese central authority was hardly exercised in the outer provinces. In other words, in those days the Chinese Emperor was more or less in the same position as the Mughal Emperors after Aurangzeb. There was no Chinese Army in Tibet and all that the Younghusband expedition had to do was to fight the ill-equipped, ill-trained Tibetan army of a few thousands with no leadership and experience; and even then Younghusband required more than a brigade to overcome Tibetan opposition and reach Lhasa. The position in 1950 was entirely different. China was stronger under the Communist Government of Mao Tse-tung than it ever had been previously in its history. Its land army consisted of nearly 250 divisions, not all well-equipped, but it had got all the arms which the Americans had supplied to Chiang Kai-shek; and many of Chiang's famous battalions had gone over completely to the Communists. Moreover, this was an

army which had conducted warfare in mountainous terrain and in extremely cold weather for nearly twenty years and, therefore, was undoubtedly the world's best-trained and battle-innoculated guerilla army specially trained to operate in difficult regions. So, if India wanted to send troops to Tibet, it would have to face not a small ill-trained Tibetan force but a very strong, well-trained and experienced Chinese army, which was more than holding its own against the powerful modern US army in Korea.

There was some possibility, though even this was doubtful, that if we were able to spare two or three divisions of troops for Tibet at this time, the position might have been different and the Chinese advance might have been halted. What the international repercussions to such a move would have been is difficult to guess. It is almost certain that both Russia and Nationalist China would have accused India of aggression in the Security Council. America with its strong ties with the KMT Government could not have taken a different position as its subsequent conduct showed. Even the British were quite equivocal and did not allow the Tibetan case to be raised in the United Nations. The other member of the Security Council, France, which had fought the war as China's ally, would certainly have accused India of aggression. But assuming that India was prepared to ignore all these international considerations, could she at that stage spare any troops for Tibet to resist the Chinese onslaught?

Of the pre-partition Indian army of 500,000 men, India got as her share less than 300,000 men comprising three divisions and twenty-seven regiments besides about 18 regiments of artillery.* Many of the formations had been cut up during the partition to allow the Muslim personnel to go to Pakistan. Before any reorganisation could be done, the war in Kashmir had been thrust on India. In 1950, India was still suffering from the trauma of the partition. Though a cease-fire had been declared in Kashmir, there could not be any withdrawal of troops from that sector which had pinned down over one-third of the then existing armed strength. The Communists were carrying on an armed liberation struggle in Telengana and several other parts of the country.

*Kavic, *India's Quest for Security*.

There had been large-scale disturbances in East Pakistan leading to thousands of refugees pouring into West Bengal. Even the colossal refugee problem created by migrants from West Pakistan had remained unsolved. So the weak Indian army had its hands more than full with the situation it was facing at home and in Kashmir. Even so it would not be correct to say that the question of armed intervention in Tibet had never been considered.

I was present at a meeting held in 1950 by the Foreign Secretary, at which K.M. Panikkar, our Ambassador in China, and the Chief of the Army Staff, General Cariappa, were present. At this meeting Panikkar gave a long dissertation on Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and tried to make out that it really meant no more than acknowledging the titular overlordship of China but did not in any way interfere with the practical independence and internal autonomy of Tibet. No one else at the meeting was convinced by the argument. We accepted that the Indian Government as a successor government had to recognise Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, and there could be at this stage no going back on that position. But whilst Great Britain earlier and now India were talking of Chinese suzerainty and Tibetan autonomy, the Chinese had always claimed sovereignty and were doing so now. Moreover, "liberation" in Communist language meant nothing but conquest and depriving Tibet of her status by force. The question then was asked as to what should be done to prevent the Chinese from pressing their claim of sovereignty by armed invasion. On the question of India sending troops to stop the Chinese, Panikkar explained that legally India's action would be indefensible. However, when the question was put to General Cariappa, he quite categorically said that he could not spare any troops or could spare no more than a battalion for Tibet, so hard-pressed was he with his commitments on the Pakistan front and with the internal troubles raised both by communal and Communist forces. He was also clear that this battalion could not go much farther than Yatung or at the most might be able to place a company at Gyantse. Moreover, he explained that the Indian army was not equipped or trained to operate at such heights and would be at a serious disadvantage against the Chinese army which had much

better training and experience in fighting in these extremely cold plateau and were even better armed, having acquired all the arms which the USA had poured into China to bolster the KMT army. What Cariappa said at that time was indeed very discouraging and disappointing because I had also favoured military intervention in Tibet to save it from China. But the General gave the correct and realistic position, the sum total of which was that India was in no position whatsoever at that time to intervene militarily in Tibet to prevent Chinese aggression. And he was right. It would have been suicidal for India to send a couple of battalions—and that was all that could have been spared—which were then neither trained nor equipped for operations at such heights against the vast battle-poised Chinese army of two and a half millions, larger than even the Russian and the American armies put together.

Critics who cite the example of the Younghusband expedition to argue what India should have done, forget that when on the heels of Younghusband's withdrawal, the Chinese Army under the Manchu General, Chao Erh-feng, attacked Tibet, in spite of the repeated appeals of the Dalai Lama, the mighty British Government of those days did not raise a finger to stop the Chinese invasion and for the first time in its history, in 1908, Tibet was militarily conquered by the Chinese and reduced to the position of a Chinese province. The British even had to accept the dismissal of those Tibetan ministers who had negotiated the treaty with Younghusband and tolerate the presence of Chinese Officers at Phari and Yatung and deal with them in all trade matters. Except for giving the thirteenth Dalai Lama shelter in Indian territory, the British refused to give him any other assistance. And as mentioned earlier Great Britain was then the mightiest power in the world. Again, in 1919, and also in 1931, when the Chinese attacked Inner Tibet and took away parts of that territory from the Dalai Lama's control, the British did not intervene physically and even the meagre arms supply to the Dalai Lama was made most reluctantly and was conditional on Tibet not taking the offensive.

Another count on which Pandit Nehru has been criticised is

that he accorded recognition to the People's Republic of China without making it conditional on China guaranteeing the autonomy of Tibet and the Chinese acceptance of the validity of the McMahon Line frontier in the north-east of India. Much regret was expressed at the fall of Chiang Kai-Shek who, at a critical moment of India's struggle for freedom, had lent his moral support to the cause of Indian independence, though his main purpose at that time was to secure full-hearted Indian participation in the war against Japan. In Parliament, Pandit Nehru justified the recognition on the ground that "it was not a question of approving or disapproving the change but of recognising a major event in history and dealing with it". He had no doubt that the Communist regime was firmly established and there was no force likely to supplant it. In fact, it would have been unwise to delay the recognition. It was not that China was newly emerging into independence. China had always been an independent country and was one of the five permanent members of the Security Council. There was no change in the international status of China; there was only a change of government. Pandit Nehru said that "this recognition was only the recognition of a fact and reality. A bordering country like India, with 2,000 miles of common frontier, could not shut her eyes to this reality and refuse to recognise the new Chinese Government and thereby deprive herself of all means of negotiating with it. Even if the Government of India had delayed the recognition, the Chinese, who had already declared their intention of liberating Tibet, would not have desisted from doing so. The presence of a strong Communist Government on India's border was no doubt inconvenient from many points of view and posed danger in several ways; but this danger could in no way be lessened by pretending that it did not exist; and non-recognition of the new Government of China would have amounted to just that.

"Settle everything by discussions," said Bismarck, "but keep a million bayonets behind" "Power grows out of the barrel of a gun," said Mao. India had not the guns or the bayonets to spare in Tibet. Hence its diplomacy was always at a disadvantage. It had to take note of the fact that it was faced by a resurgent

country with the world's most powerful land army, which had humbled the Americans in Korea, a country whose leadership was ruthless and would have no scruples in carrying out its intentions, i.e. subjugating Tibet and including in the Chinese Communist empire all the territories which previously the Chinese Emperors had claimed to be Chinese territories whether they had ruled over them or not. The dialogue was, therefore, between two unequal parties and it would have abruptly ended if India had shown the least hostility towards China, and the result would have been an immediate Chinese hostile presence not only on our frontiers but also in the tribal areas adjoining the frontiers over which the British had not extended any effective administration when they left India. The McMahon Line was only on the map and did not exist as an administrative boundary, because there were no Indian administrative personnel, troops or police permanently posted within 100 miles of that boundary. It would have been easy for the Chinese to create trouble in these unadministered areas which had certain religious, ethnic, cultural and trade ties with Tibet. If in 1950 India had started on a military expedition on the scale that she was forced to undertake in 1962, she would have been in serious economic difficulties and the Chinese might have been able to extend their frontiers up to the foothills of NEFA and might have even been able to detach Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal from India's sphere of influence. China could have even threatened Indian positions in the hill areas of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, and large parts of Ladakh would have been indefensible as there was no road link at that time with Leh. On the other hand, to keep a friendly posture would help to continue the dialogue and allow time to firmly consolidate India's hold on these previously unadministered areas.

A hostile posture by India at this time would also have been of little help to Tibet. On the plea of removing imperial influences, China would have immediately started ruthless grinding in Tibet. And there would then be no restraining hand to lessen the rigours of Chinese occupation. Failing outright military intervention, which was not at all feasible, the only sensible course to follow was to save as much of Tibetan autonomy as possible. This is

the policy which even the British had followed after the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1908 till the Chinese army disintegrated after the fall of the Manchu empire. Pandit Nehru was genuinely averse to the idea of having any extra-territorial rights in Tibet. All his life he had fought against such rights of foreign powers acquired by force of arms in a weak and subdued country. But apart from his personal predilections in this matter and those of other Indian leaders, a unilateral renunciation of these rights inherited from a foreign imperialist ruler was the only way of convincing China and Russia that India had no hostile designs or feelings against those countries. It was only thus that the Chinese could be induced to follow a moderate path with respect to Tibet. That Pandit Nehru succeeded in disarming Chinese suspicions and in fairly consolidating India's position in NEFA and the frontier regions and also in maintaining a fair amount of Tibetan autonomy and the Dalai Lama's authority in Tibet up-till 1959 is a clear testimony to the soundness of the policy he had decided to adopt at that time.

Pandit Nehru was never blind to China's imperialist ambitions. Even in his statement in Parliament in December, 1950, he had expressed in clear language his distress at the Chinese action. In various talks he had stressed that the Chinese leaders were goaded by their extremely nationalistic and imperialist tendencies and Communism was only a cloak under cover of which they were trying to further their nationalistic ambitions. When in 1952, in the early stages of our advent into the field of foreign Intelligence, we had asked his advice about the targets, he had clearly visualised that the two enemies whom India would have to confront would be Pakistan, which would utilise Pan-Islamism in its support, and China, which would utilise international Communism for its own ends, and had fixed these to be our main targets in the foreign field. When there was criticism of India conceding a point to China, Pandit Nehru had explained that a country which had no military might was always at a disadvantage at the conference table. His support to China's claim for entry in the UN was, apart from the correctness of that stand, also motivated by the desire that China might shed its hostility to the world in

general if she was given a place in the comity of nations. He had, however, hoped that Tibet would never be subdued and, therefore, had advised us to befriend all the Tibetan refugees in India, help them in every way possible and maintain their morale. He could not publicly announce these policies nor was there any use in publicly denouncing China. It would have lost for India the position of a mediator and moderator in Tibet which she held for nearly a decade—no small achievement in the field of diplomacy. He repeatedly stressed that our northern frontiers which had long been dead frontiers had suddenly become alive, pregnant with dangers and, therefore, they had to be properly guarded, and he inspired and supported every move on our part to extend our administration to the furthest limits of our frontier. He counselled us not to be led away by the open professions of the Government in these matters but to judge everything in India's interests and seek his advice whenever there was a conflict. Even in respect of the Chinese residents in India, who owed allegiance to the Kuomintang Government, he allowed a liberal policy to be followed in spite of strong protests from Communist China's Ambassador in India and the Chinese Consulates in Calcutta and Bombay were not allowed to harass the non-Communist Chinese population in those cities in any way.

Critics might still shake their heads and say that if Pandit Nehru foresaw all this danger why did he not prepare India by taking effective measures to protect the country. This charge is also groundless for, as Khera's book *India's Defence Problems* would show, much all-round progress had been achieved in all directions, including defence. Taking the administration into the frontier areas and improving their communications were stupendous undertakings and yet the administration had been taken to the furthest inhabited locality and many arterial and even smaller roads had been laid in the decade that followed. The British left India with no defence industries worth the name and, for the greater part of defence equipment, India had to go to the foreign market. Heavy industry was non-existent practically—and yet, without this as the base, no proper defence was possible. All these required capital and so non-developmental expenditure had

to be kept to the minimum. And yet the defence services had to be expanded. A practically new Air Force had to be raised and a new Navy. Even the Army had to be raised from the post-partition shambles and made into a fighting machine equipped according to India's capacity with an eye to the actual needs. If we could not progress fast enough, this was because of various difficulties in the way which on occasions looked almost insurmountable. But yet steady progress was maintained, quite fast in some years, rather halting in others, but there was progress all the time; and behind all this stood the figure of Nehru, who had clearly visualised the dangers confronting India and who had the fullest comprehension of the all-round measures that would be needed to overcome them.

7 India's Northern Frontiers

EXCEPT THE PORTIONS covered by Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, the whole of India's northern international frontier from the trijunction of India, Afghanistan and Sinkiang in the north-west to the trijunction of India, Burma and Tibet in the north-east lies along the Sinkiang and Tibet regions of China. The State of Jammu and Kashmir has Sinkiang to its north and Tibet to the east. The States of old Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have Tibet in the east and the State of Uttar Pradesh has Tibet on the north as the border. Then there are about 700 miles of Nepal-Tibet border. After that come the borders of Sikkim and then of Bhutan with Tibet. From the trijunction of India, Bhutan and Tibet in the west, to the trijunction of India, Burma and Tibet in the east, the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) has Tibet on the northern border.

"The Report of the Officials of the Governments of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question" released by the Government in January, 1961, and printed in the Government of India Press in 1962 gives both the Indian description of the boundary and that put forward by the Chinese. Those who wish to have detailed information about the respective cases put forward by India and China about the boundary may refer to the above publication. But a very informative and concise book on the India-China border is the one by G.N. Rao entitled *The India-China Border—A Reappraisal.* Rao, who was one of the Advisers of the Indian team under J.S. Mehta, was fully acquainted with the border problem.

It is clear from a study of the accounts given by the above-mentioned documents that as between Ladakh on one side and Tibet on its east, the border had been always traditional—the tradition going as far back as the tenth century and had never changed. Places like Demchok, Rudok and Lanak La had been

mentioned in the accounts of many foreign travellers going from Ladakh to Tibet or vice versa as situated on the boundary between the two territories. These documents would show that as regards the eastern boundary of Ladakh, there was complete information and there could be no doubt about its authenticity.

The same, however, cannot be said of the northern boundary of Ladakh along Sinkiang. This boundary had been shifted from time to time by the British Government according to the exigencies of the situation. All the earlier Chinese maps had shown the southern boundary of Sinkiang as the great Kuen Lun Mountain Range. This would be the most natural boundary separating two watersheds and moreover the Kuen Lun Range also formed the boundary between Sinkiang and Tibet. Actually this was shown as the northern boundary of Ladakh in various maps published by the Government of India up to 1936. Further west, the Mustagh Atta Range which was a continuation of the Kuen Lun Range would form the boundary. This northern area of the Ladakh region of Kashmir State could be divided into three parts. At the eastern end at the trijunction of Ladakh, Sinkiang and Tibet were the high lands known as Aksai Chin, Soda Plains and Lingzi Tang. About their inclusion in Ladakh there never had been any dispute. The area was uninhabited, the height being fifteen to sixteen thousand feet. But the Ladakhis used to go to these areas for shikar and for collecting salt. The patrols of Kashmir State also used to visit these areas regularly in the summer. The central sector consisted of the sparsely populated area between the Kuen Lun and the Karakoram Ranges which included Shahidullah, Malikshai, etc. Oppressed by marauding criminals, the people of this area had in 1860 appealed to the Sinkiang authorities to take them under their administration, but the latter had declined to do so as this area fell outside Sinkiang jurisdiction. As this state of lawlessness was affecting Kashmir's Yarkhandi trade, in 1890, the Maharaja of Kashmir wanted to extend his administration to this area and asked for permission from the British to do this, but the latter would not agree. On the western extremity of this frontier, the Mir of Hunza (Kanjut) used to exercise effective authority over Tangdumbash Plains between the Sarikol and Muztagh Atta

Ranges north of the Kilik-Mintaka Pass and this position was accepted by the Sinkiang authorities and even by the Chinese who, however, made a shadowy claim over the Kanjut area of Hunza. As Hunza was under Kashmir, so this territory north of the Kilik-Mintaka Pass legitimately belonged to Kashmir State. So if the reality of the situation and the actual position were taken into consideration, the northern frontier of Kashmir would have been along the Kuen Lun and Mustagh Atta Ranges and this was shown as the southern and south-western boundary of Sinkiang, south and west of which the Chinese had never exercised any jurisdiction. If this position had been accepted, then the north-west extremity of Kashmir State would have had a common boundary with Tadzhikstan of Soviet Russia.

In the beginning of the twentieth century the Russo-phobia of the British was so strong that their entire Central Asian policy was based upon creating wedges of independent countries between their Indian empire and the Russian empire. In order to do this the British invited the Afghanistan Government to take over the spur of territory north of Mintaka-Kilik Pass which the latter did. The British even would not concede the right of the Mir of Hunza over the Tangdumbash Pamirs, though the Sinkiang authorities had accepted that right. The British traded the factual possession of the Mir of Hunza over the Tangdumbash Pamirs with the shadowy Chinese claims on Kanjut. The British also induced the Chinese Government to administer the Shahidulla territory south of Kuen Lun and north of Karakoram. The Chinese gladly accepted this offer and for the first time became conscious of the possibility of extending their Sinkiang territory further south. With the formation of this wedge the British assured themselves that any encroachment by Russia on the British Indian empire would have to be preceded by an encroachment over either of the two independent countries of Afghanistan and China. As mentioned in an earlier Chapter, even the whole Tibet policy of the British was circumscribed by this Russo-phobia, and rather than let Russia come into Tibet, over which China exercised no jurisdiction, the British favoured the Chinese in Tibet, as at that time the Chinese were weak and disunited and were, in no position to pose a threat

to the mighty British empire. Hence purely due to the exigencies of international politics and for securing British interests in Europe and elsewhere, Indian, Kashmiri and Tibetan interests were sacrificed and a large part of the territory south of the main Kuen Lun Ranges known as the Karakash valley and also the Tangdumbash Pamirs were handed over to China on a platter and for the first time the Chinese came into this area and put a pillar on the Karakoram pass to mark the boundary. However, this did not in any way affect the position of Aksai Chin, Soda Plains and Lingzi Tang and they continued to remain under Kashmir State. But once having abandoned the main watershed of the Kuen Lun Range as the frontier, the British had to take recourse to another watershed further south and though Aksai Chin etc. still remained in Kashmir, the Sinkiang jurisdiction was allowed to come further south by nearly fifty miles on this eastern end also, giving an opportunity to the Chinese to put forward their spurious claim on Aksai Chin later.

The Government of India as a successor Government had to accept the British decision, though, following the example of the Chinese, it could easily have claimed the whole of the area north of Aksai Chin up to Kuen Lun Ranges as a part of the Indian Territory of Ladakh. But the Government of India accepted the legacy of the British and drew a boundary starting from the tri-junction of India, China and Afghanistan through Kilik Pass, Mintaka Pass, Kharchanai Pass, Parpik Pass and Khunjerab Pass. These were all taken as the boundary of Hunza State. From Khunjerab the boundary crossed the Muztagh River and came to the Aghil Mountains and then on to the Aghil watershed and to Marbo Pass and Shaksgam Pass to the Karakoram Pass. A little to the east of this pass the main Karakoram Range takes a southerly direction and no longer forms the boundary. But from the point the Karakoram Range turns south, another range of mountains, known as the Akhtagh Range, takes off and this forms the watershed between Shyok coming to the Indus system and the watershed of Yarkand. This was taken as the boundary east of Karakoram Pass, going through Qara Tagh Pass, crossing the Karakash River and then joining with the Kuen Lun Mountains.

Thereafter the boundary went through Yangi Pass along the crest of the mountains separating the Yurungkash basin from those of the lakes in Aksai Chin. Leaving the crest of the Kuen Lun Mountains, the boundary running south-westwards passed along the watershed separating the basins of Amtogar and Salig Jilganang Lakes in India from those of Leighten and Tsoggar Lakes in Tibet and finally came down to Lanak La.

As explained in the officials' report and also by G.N. Rao, this boundary, which was accepted by the Government of India and was put on the map, followed the natural high watershed principle throughout and was also the natural boundary of the area up to which the Ladakhis had from times immemorial exercised the right of pasture and collection of salt. It is true that north of this line, which was a no-man's-land, the Ladakhis did not normally go. Through it lay the trade routes between Yarkhand and Leh and also between Yarkhand and Gartok. But, as the British had already handed over this area to the Chinese, there was no point in going into the respective merits of the Chinese or the Indian claims over this area any longer. The Chinese would not discuss the boundary of Kashmir west of Karakoram, because that area was under the control of Pakistan. Later a treaty was signed by China with Pakistan, in which the latter country accepted a boundary further south of the line mentioned above conceding the entire Shaksgam valley measuring nearly 400 sq. miles to China. However, from the east of Karakoram Pass the Chinese maintained that the Karakoram Range was the watershed but, as geographically this was wrong, they picked up any hill feature and drew an ad hoc boundary line joining Karakoam Pass straight with Pangong Lake, about 100 miles south of Lanak La. From Pangong Lake to Chumar via Demchok, i.e. the eastern boundary of Ladakh, the difference was about the alignment and not much territory was involved. But between the northern boundary of Ladakh as claimed by India and the southern boundary of Sinkiang as claimed by China there were 16,000 sq. miles of territory which was uninhabited. Through this lay three trade routes: (1) through Karakoram Pass via Panamik or Shyok to Leh, (2) via Haji Langar and passing through Shinglung, Shamul Lumpha, Tsogat-

salu, Phobrang to Leh and (3) from Haji Langar through the eastern end of Aksai Chin, past Amtogar Lake to Rudok and then to Gartok. There were some good pastures between Pangong Lake and Lanak La which the people of Phobrang and other neighbouring villages in Ladakh utilised during summer. Similarly the lakes of Amtogar were used for collection of salt. Some enthusiastic shikaris travelled in this area in quest of mountain goats or bears and, besides the traders who used to come from Khotan (Hotien) to Leh, the only other parties who visited this area were the patrol and survey parties sent by the Kashmir Government. There was no need for any effective administrative occupation of this territory as it was uninhabited.

South of Ladakh and up to the trijunction of Nepal, India and Tibet, there was little difference between theIndian and the Chinese alignment of the boundary and the high watershed of the Himalayas was taken as the frontier between the two countries. There were no doubt disputes about a few places like Nilang, Jedang, Barahoti, etc. where the Chinese claimed certain tracts of territory west and south of the watershed, being, according to them, the traditional pastures of the Tibetans. However, the area on the Indian side of the watershed had remained in effective Indian occupation and, in any case, the total disputed area as well as the population involved was very small. In 1961, the Chinese demarcated the frontier with Nepal from the trijunction of India, Nepal and Tibet to the trijunction of Nepal, Sikkim and Tibet following the high watershed principle. The same principle had been followed in 1890 in fixing the Sikkim-Tibet boundary and had been accepted by the then Chinese Government. The traditional boundary between Tibet and Bhutan also followed the high watershed principle and this was the principle which had been followed in drawing the McMahon Line to delimit the boundary between India and Tibet in the north-eastern region and also the boundary of the northern part of Burma with Tibet. In 1960, China accepted this delineation of the McMahon Line as the boundary between Tibet and Burma. But in NEFA itself the Chinese claimed practically the entire area coming right down to the foothills, more or less taking the south-eastern corner of Bhutan as

the starting point but ending at the trijunction of India, Burma and Tibet as fixed according to the McMahon Line. In this they gave the go-by to the high Himalayan watershed principle which had been followed from the Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh frontier, and all along Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan and again on the Burma frontier. The territory claimed by the Chinese amounted to nearly 35,000 sq. miles and was inhabited by a large number of Indian tribals whose total population would come to nearly three handred thousand.

So far as the NEFA area was concerned, the Indian records showed quite clearly that the Ahom kings had exercised effective administrative jurisdiction over these areas and the tribes inhabiting them, with whom they had treaty relations. In those days the boundaries of the countries were not delimited; the fixation of boundaries is a modern arrangement. So the Ahom kings were not bothered to define their boundaries so long as the tribes inhabiting those areas were loyal and helpful to them. The British inherited this position and maintained the various treaty relations. They did not bother to extend effective criminal and revenue administration into these tribal areas. But this was not an exception in NEFA. That was the British policy in all the tribal areas and just as NEFA was a non-regulated area, similarly the Naga Hills, the Mizo Hills and even the districts like Santhal Parganas, Singhbhum, Ranchi, etc. in Bihar and the large agency areas of Ganjam and Korapat districts in Orissa were also non-regulated. Leaving the tribals very much on their own to follow their own customs and only protecting them against encroachment by the plains people but allowing the Christian missionaries to penetrate and proselytise them was the traditional British method of administering tribal areas whether they were on the frontier or in the heartland of India. So long as the tribals of NEFA did not carry on depredations on the settled areas of Assam, the British were satisfied and found no need to extend their regular criminal and revenue administration into these territories which were extremely difficult of access and not particularly healthy and yielded little revenue. It would also cost a lot to make administrative arrangements and prepare lines of communications.

Alarmed by the incursions which Chao Erh-feng had made when he overran Tibet between 1906 to 1909, the British felt it necessary to have a more effective control of this area by establishing outposts as near the frontier as possible. It was at this time that a thorough survey of the area was undertaken and the result of this survey was the drawing of the McMahon Line, which followed the correct watershed principle. But this was not the geographical boundary only. Actually there was no similarity between the tribals living south of the McMahon Line and the Tibetans living to the north of it. Excepting the Mompas in the Tawang area, who were Buddhists and were akin to the Bhutanese and not Tibetans, there were very few tribals who even professed the Buddihist faith. The Mishmis were Vaishnavites of a type and followed the Gosains. All the early travellers who had traversed this area had testified that the Himalayan Range was the effective boundary between Tibet in the north and the tribal areas in the south. Over such a long frontier, which was not guarded, there was bound to be a little overflow of population from one side to the other and just as there was some Tibetan population south of the McMahon Line, similarly there was a good deal of Dafla and Mishmi population north of it. McMahon in drawing the line left the high watershed feature near the big bend of the Tsangpo (known in NEFA as the Dehang and in Assam as the Brahmaputra). This big bend of the Tsangpo contained within it the Pemako and the Chimdru areas, the inhabitants of which were not Tibetans and who had more access to India than to Tibet. Even as late as 1959 petitions were filed by the people of Pemako and Chimdru to the Government of India to take them under Indian administration and there would have been every justification for doing so, because here was a voluntary appeal by a population to come under India and no better plebiscite could have been thought of; but the Government of India stuck to the McMahon Line and expressed its inability to take them under protection. In one or two places also mentioned by G.N. Rao, the McMahon Line made slight dents into the Indian territory to protect certain trade routes of the Tibetans but otherwise, except in the Pemako-Chimdru area, the boundary followed

the high watershed principle and was really the dividing line between two peoples with distinct civilisations, languages and religions.

The McMahon Line was accepted by the Tibetans—and at that time Tibet had the power to enter into treaties with foreign countries. This was not even objected to by the Chinese. Later on, however, when the British tried to extend their revenue administration into NEFA and open up the country, the Chinese made a protest, which was disposed of by the British, who made it clear that the area fell within the recognised and traditional British territory. The Tibetan Government made no protest even then.

In his book *The Guilty Men of 1962*, Mankekar has considered that the task of the Indian Officials regarding the border in 1960-61 was a waste of time and the Indian side behaved very naively and put all their cards on the table, whereas the Chinese withheld most of the information asked of them. This is rather an unfair appraisal made in an otherwise able account of the events which led to the conflict of 1962. The Chinese could not answer many of the Indian questions, because they did not have the answers as the facts were so patently against them. The Indian side could give answers to all the Chinese questions, because they had the facts. This was the occasion when India had to specify with full justification the boundary which she claimed. Such a case might later go before an International Court and if evidence was not produced at this time, it might not be accepted afterwards. Moreover, a great deal of Indian evidence was extracted from the Chinese maps and their own statements, and it shows how thorough a study the Indian team had made. The Indian team headed by J.S. Mehta deserves full credit for the detailed study which it had made and the cast-iron case which it had put up. It was only after this study that we knew clearly what our co-ordinates were in respect of any particular territory which we claimed. Before that the entire McMahon Line was indicated by a line in a small-scale map, and the same was the case with the rest of the boundary. Much of our hesitancy in taking up with the Chinese cases of boundary violations by them was due to the fact

that we had, before this study, no clear idea of our co-ordinates and so could not, on many occasions, clearly state that a border violation had in fact taken place.

However, to put it in a nutshell, leaving out the small bits of territories which were in dispute in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh but which were effectively under Indian control, the main disputes between India and China were over the 16,000 sq. miles of the uninhabited territory in the north-eastern portion of Ladakh known as Aksai Chin, Lingzi Tang and Soda Plains and 35,000 sq. miles of NEFA which was inhabited more thickly near the foothills and sparsely towards the northern reaches but all the same was populated right up to the frontier. It was deeply wooded, and there were large valleys which could sustain quite a large population.

The whole of Ladakh can be called a frontier region and the population excepting on the western end near Kargil is ethnically similar to the Tibetans and quite different from the people of Kashmir proper. Though the Ladakhis speak a different dialect, they write in the Tibetan script and their religion, culture and customs are similar to those of the Tibetans. At the time of the Maharaja's rule there used to be a Governor in Leh, who was usually a British Officer of the Indian Political Service. There was also a British Officer posted in Gilgit to function as the British Agent for the States of Gilgit, Hunza, Swat, Chitral, etc., though these were under the Kashmir Government. The idea of posting British Officers was really to keep a careful watch on the advance south and eastwards by the Russians from their Central Asian dominions. With the departure of the British from India and the occupation of the western part of Kashmir State, including the feudatory States of Gilgit, Hunza, Swat, Chitral, etc. by Pakistan, the post of Governor also ceased to exist. The new Kashmir Government, after the deposition of the Maharaja, lost interest in these northern territories and Ladakh was left with only a Tehsildar at Leh as its highest administrator. There was also only a nominal police station. Their jurisdiction was exercised only in Leh itself and the rest of the sparsely populated territory was divided between the various monasteries and they collected

taxes from the people and also regulated their lives. Another complicating factor was that these monasteries recognised one or other monastery in Tibet as their religious heads and young abbots of these monasteries invariably spent many years of the formative periods of their lives in receiving education and discipline in some of the more famous and bigger Tibetan monasteries.

In the earlier part of the century when the British had still ambitions of their own in Central Asia, many British explorers and surveyors had visited the areas known as Aksai Chin, Soda Plains, Lingzi Tang and even the area between the Indian boundary and the main Kuen Lun Range; and the maps of this territory, though not completely accurate, on account of the inadequacies of surveying methods of those days, were still workable and the main features were well-known. But with the collapse of the Russian Czars and the disappearance of an immediate threat from Russian Central Asia, the British interest in these areas also waned and there were no more surveys or explorations of these areas after 1910.

As mentioned earlier, the entire area of Aksai Chin, Soda Plains and Lingzi Tang was uninhabited and uninhabitable and was devoid even of vegetation. The nearest settled Ladakhi village was Phobrang and Ladakhi interest lay in collecting salt from Amtogar and other lakes and this the Ladakhis used to do regularly. As for police and revenue administration as is known these days, there was none, nor was there any need for it and, in any case, with the equipment available in those days any posting of troops or police could be only for three or four months in the year—from June to September. There was also no need for this, because there was no danger of any encroachment. However, on the eastern side of Ladakh bordering Tibet the position was somewhat different. A village like Demchok (Parigas) lay within a mile of the border and even Chushul and Koyul were not more than three to four miles from the frontier. There were large pasture grounds in Niagzu, north of Pangong Lake and north-east of Phobrang, where the people of Phobrang and villages nearabout used to take their cattle and sheep for grazing

every summer. But even in these villages there was not even a token of temporal administration and the villagers looked to the monasteries to solve their problems. There used to be free exchange of goods between the people of these villages and of those across the border and there was no restriction on movements across the frontiers.

Therefore, in the Ladakh region outside the area bounded by the Ladakh Range in the north and east there was no revenue or police administration and the small population, who were all Ladakhis, whilst owing their loyalty to the Maharaja of Kashmir, were more or less left to themselves and were controlled by the monasteries.

The same pattern was followed in the areas of Lahaul and Spiti, which at the time of partition fell within the State of Punjab. These two areas were parts of Kulu Tehsil, and there was only a Tehsildar at Kulu under the District Collector of Dharamsala in Punjab. The Lahaulis were administered by the local Thakurs, the autocarts of Lahaul, and the people of Spiti by the Nono. The latter had all the revenue and judicial powers in this area. No revenue was due from this territory and so long as the people remained loyal to the British, the latter did not bother about extending any police or revenue administration or introducing any development schemes. The people of Lahaul and Spiti were also of Mongolian extract and exhibited some Tibetan influence on them, though they talked their own dialect; and, as the name shows, the Thakurs were Rajputs from Kangra who had settled there and brought this territory under their dominion.

The position was the same with the Chini Tehsil of the Mahasu District of Himachal Pradesh. The entire area of Chini, which is now named the Kinnaur District of Himachal Pradesh, had only one Tehsildar at Chini village and a police station. It was a part of Rampur State which claimed jurisdiction over certain villages on the Tibetan side of the frontier also. There were few villages near the frontier and even they were about ten to twelve miles distant from it.

The entire hill area of Uttar Pradesh, which bordered Tibet, used to be divided into three districts—Tehri Garhwal, Pauri Garhwal and Almora. Each of these district headquarters was

nearly 150 miles away from the border. There was not even a sub-division under the District and the entire administration was based on the Patwari system. The village had a Malguzar, who was the local landlord and policeman and was allowed to keep a part of the revenue he collected. A large number of such villages used to be under one Patwari. The reports coming from these Patwaris to district headquarters sometimes used to take months and nobody bothered about the frontier population. There were police stations only in some of the larger towns like Almora, Pauri, Ranikhet, Srinagar, etc. However, through Tehri Garhwal and Pauri Garhwal districts lay the routes of the four famous pilgrimage centres—Jamnotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath—and during the pilgrimage season small police posts used to be opened on the routes. In this border area the people were all Hindus who contributed large contingents (Garhwalis and Kumaonis) to the Indian Army and also to the Indian administration. There were only a few villages which were inhabited by Bhutias who were Buddhists and acknowledged the spiritual authority of one or other of the monasteries in Tibet but were entirely under the Indian administration. These border people were left to themselves and very little attempt was made to provide them with hospitals and schools and facilities for trade or to improve agriculture or organise any social services; nor was there any close supervision from any executive officer or the police. They were neglected, because extension of the administration would have cost money and there was little to be gained in return.

The position on the Nepal-India border was, however, quite different. The greater part of the Nepal border lay in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and a small part in the south-east in West Bengal. The border areas were populated and cultivated on both sides right up to the frontier over most of the territory and the frontier was also demarcated by posts leaving several yards of no-man's-land on both sides of these posts. There were police stations situated almost on the frontier all along the Nepal border. Nepal had also similar arrangements on its own side, because it was this area of Nepal where the population was the thickest. But the state of the Nepal-Tibet frontier was much the same as

or even worse than that of Uttar Pradesh or the Punjab-Tibet frontier. Those areas were left completely neglected and there was little information even about the passes or movements of people. The same was the case in Sikkim and Bhutan. The pressure of population was always in the southern parts and very little in the northern areas, where the heights and the climate made the areas uninhabitable; and neither Sikkim nor Bhutan had even a modicum of administration in these northern parts bordering Tibet.

In NEFA the population was small compared to its size. The area was very thickly wooded, rainfall was heavy and there was no road communication. As G.N. Rao has shown, most of the population tried to settle near the foothills and as one went further north, the population became very sparse. The administrative arrangements made in these areas were extremely simple. The entire NEFA consisting of 35,000 sq. miles was administered by two districts—the Sadya Hill District and the Abor Hill District. Even these District Officers lived in the plains and had jurisdiction over Assam areas as well and they belonged to the Assam cadre. So the entire NEFA area bordering Tibet was under the administration of two part-time officers of district rank, who hardly ever visited the interior. Nominal administration was through agents amongst the various tribes called Gaon Buras or Dubhashis. When a particular tribe became a little recalcitrant, the British sent a punitive mission and that was enough to keep the tribe under check. Some of the tribal chiefs used to receive monetary grants from the Government, and a threat of the stoppage of the grant was enough to keep them quiet. There was hardly any touring by the civil officers, because touring was very difficult, expensive and time-consuming. The tribes followed their own tribal rules and customs, settled their disputes themselves, raided each other's territories and even practised slavery. The British had nothing to fear from a weak China and neutralised Tibet and shied at the prospect of extending modern administration to the frontier, as this would be extremely costly and would bring little or no return. However, when the British found that there were chances of a united and strong China emerging and after the experience of Chao Erh-feng's penetration into some parts of

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the Mishmi area, they became more careful and opened a few more sub-divisional posts in the interior; but even these did not reach within seventy to eighty miles of the frontier.

It may be added here that the state of administration in the Sinkiang area bordering the northern parts of Kashmir and that of Tibet bordering India, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan was no better and would even suffer in comparison with whatever Indian administration was exercised south and west of the frontier. There was, however, one small complicating factor. This was that, apart from the Buddhist population of Ladakh, Lahaul and Spiti and in some eight to ten villages of Chini Tehsil, there were a few pockets of Buddhists in Nilang, Jedang and Garbyang of UP and they used to send some annual presents to the monasteries in Tibet, the abbots of which were their spiritual heads. Because of this connection the Tibetan Dzongpons had tried to collect taxes from these villages. In NEFA, the Tawang area was inhabited by the Mompas who were Buddhists but were akin to the Bhutanese further west; and the Tawang monastery owed allegiance to the Sera monastery in Tibet and even the abbot of Tawang used to be nominated by that monastery. Though the monasteries could exercise only spiritual powers, they had often abrogated temporal powers also to themselves. But the real temporal power lay in the hands of the tribal chiefs who used to be called the Dev Rajas. There was a small Buddhist population, also Mompa, near Tuting, where the Tsangpo entered the Indian territory, and there were a few Tibetans near Walong. One Tibetan landlord also owned some villages in the Subansiri area, but this should not be of much consequence because the Kashmir Government also claimed jurisdiction over Munsar village east of Tashigong in Tibet and the Raja of Rampur (Himachal Pradesh) actually collected revenue from certain villages in western Tibet. This collection of dues paid by one monastery to another and trade, taxes, etc. were cited by the Chinees to bolster their claim over the whole of NEFA and some of the other frontier areas.

The Indian Government inherited a most unenviable position from the British in these frontier areas. There was no police or revenue administration and no development work in the whole of

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Ladakh north and east of the Ladakh Range; in Lahaul and Spiti areas of Punjab; in the Chini area of Himachal Pradesh; and even in the frontier areas of Uttar Pradesh the administration was remote and there was very little development work. In the NEFA area similarly, administration was non-existent and the tribals were left to themselves; and though they were firmly under the control of the British, the only restriction imposed was to stop them from raiding the plains.

If there was little administration, there was even less of communication. In Ladakh, even Leh was not connected with Srinagar by a road. And there were no roads in Ladakh itself; not even bridle paths; only foot or goat tracks existed. The Rohtang Pass 10 miles east of Manali effectively barred access to Lahaul and Spiti for the major part of the year and even when the pass was open from May to September, only journey by foot was possible. There was no communication in Chini tehsil except for a bridle path to Shipki La. In Uttar Pradesh, motorable roads existed up to Almora, Pauri, Tehri, Srinagar and Chamoli. There were good bridle paths to Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath. In the rest of these hills, there were only foot tracks. In NEFA no roads existed even in the foothills.

Hardly any development work existed. The only schooling one could get in Ladakh outside Leh was as monks in the monasteries. Otherwise, the people were illiterate. There were no hospitals or dispensaries outside Leh. The situation was similar in Lahaul, Spiti and Chini. In UP, however, there were primary and secondary schools in a large number of villages but high schools only in important centres like Almora, Srinagar, Dharchula, Chamoli, etc. Hospitals or dispensaries also existed only at these places. In NEFA outside Pasi Ghat, there was no school, no dispensary, not even an agricultural overseer.

Telegraph offices existed only in Leh and Chini. But in UP besides the important towns, the pilgrimage centres like Badrinath had also telegraph offices. In NEFA there was nothing beyond Pasi Ghat.

The best administered of all these frontier regions was the UP Hill area, but there also the further north one went the less evi-

dence of administration did one see. It was mostly a Patwari administration and the Patwari combined in himself the functions of a revenue collector, magistrate and policeman. But there were so few of them and their jurisdictions were so large and unmanageable that it is said that one Patwari, Fateh Singh Rana, who was a bit of a poet, when asked to explain delay in correspondence, wrote to his Collector as follows :

"Kahāṅ rahā Niti kahāṅ rahā Mānā
Fateh Singh Rānā ne kahāṅ kahāṅ Jānā".

"On one far side is Niti and on the other far side Mānā, to which of them and how will Fateh Singh Rana go?" The utmost that Fateh Singh Rana could do was to pay an annual visit to these places.

8 New Security Problems

UNDER THE BRITISH the Intelligence Bureau's responsibility was confined only to internal intelligence and all matters of foreign and military intelligence used to be handled directly by His Majesty's Government from London. There used to be a representative of the Intelligence Bureau in London for getting from the British Intelligence such external information as affected internal security of India. When India attained independence, whilst the Intelligence Bureau's responsibilities increased greatly due to the integration of the States with India, it still did not have any responsibility for foreign Intelligence. This responsibility was given some years later (in 1951 to be precise). So, up to that time the Intelligence Bureau's work regarding external Intelligence was directed at neutralising any threats to the internal security arising from the existence of a hostile Pakistan and the emergence of a powerful China on the borders.

Towards the end of 1948 it was clear that the Kuomintang Government was on the run, and that the Communist forces would soon occupy the whole of China. When after capturing Peking in January, 1949, the Communist troops started moving southwards, many of the Chinese families residing in India became anxious about the safety of their relations in China and an appreciable infiltration of Chinese nationals from Mainland China through Burma and Singapore into India commenced. Our first concern then was to stop this illegal infiltration, because there was the potential danger of Chinese Communists also infiltrating in this manner and preparing cells within the large Chinese community which existed at Calcutta, Kalimpong, Bombay and a few other places. The problem was of the utmost concern to West Bengal, because more than three-fourths of the Chinese nationals in India lived in that State and also because the routes from Burma and

Sikkim passed through West Bengal. A conference of the officers of the West Bengal Special Branch and the Intelligence Bureau was held in Calcutta in February, 1949, in which the problem of illegal Chinese infiltration into India and other questions regarding the loyalty of the Chinese residents in the country were discussed and steps necessary to meet the new developments were formulated. One of the steps taken immediately was to strengthen the Security Control Organisations in Calcutta and Bombay, to recruit new staff and train them in the Chinese language, because it was rightly apprehended that the IB's involvement in Chinese affairs would soon assume large proportions.

On September 26, 1949, Sinkiang fell to the Communists and with that Communist China then came right up to the northern borders of Ladakh. Early in October, 1949, the IB pointed out to the Government of India the danger of infiltration along the Sinkiang-Karakoram-Leh route and suggested several security measures to meet this threat. It also pointed out that the time had come to take active measures to collect Intelligence about what was happening on the borders in Sinkiang and for this it was necessary to open an Intelligence-collecting centre at Leh. The Government of India forwarded this recommendation to the Jammu and Kashmir Government, but the latter, whilst agreeing that there was need for taking security measures, expressed its inability to assume that responsibility on account of paucity of both funds and personnel. The Intelligence Bureau itself was a very small organisation at that time and had no resources to take over the new commitment by itself. So the help of the Army was sought to open a joint IB-Army checkpost on the Leh-Sinkiang route. Without the Army's support and active assistance in those days it would have been impossible for the IB to open and maintain any posts far away from Leh because of the extreme difficulties of supplies and communications which existed then even during fair weather. The first joint IB-Army checkpost was set up at Panamik/Shyok to cover the route from Karakoram and an Intelligence post was opened at Leh. As the large area north of Panamik was completely uninhabited and bereft of even vegetation and as in these areas travel in those days was possible

only in fair weather, it was decided to send patrols to this area up to the Karakoram Pass during the summer to check trespassers and detect any signs of infiltration that might have gone unnoticed.

Though in the rest of India's northern frontier with Tibet the situation was still unchanged, after the fall of Nanking to the Communist forces in April, 1949, it was apparent that it would not take more than a year for the Chinese to enter Tibet. It was most unlikely that even the Communist Chinese would give up the traditional Chinese claim of sovereignty over that country. There was much consternation in Tibet itself and soon an appreciable influx of Tibetans into India started. We apprehended that the Chinese would soon be in Lhasa and thereafter the entire northern frontier of India, which had posed no security problems in the past, would immediately become active and be subject to serious dangers and, therefore, great vigilance would be necessary. There was a large Tibetan population in Inner Tibet which had continued to remain under Chinese control even when Tibet was semi-independent and it was easy for the Chinese to indoctrinate some of them and send them across the Indian frontier as it would be impossible to identify these elements. This danger was pointed out to the Government of India by us to consider whether the time had not come to introduce proper registration of all Tibetans coming into India. When in December, 1949, the Government of India formally recognised the Communist Government of China, the problem assumed more serious proportions as the Communist Chinese would then legally be in a position to send Communist civilians into Tibet. Hence in January, 1950, the IB suggested the withdrawal of exemption from passport and visa restrictions which the Tibetans had enjoyed till then. This was discussed in the External Affairs Ministry and it was decided that the imposition of passport and registration restrictions on the Tibetans would affect the Tibetans' morale very seriously, and that similar restrictions would then be imposed on the Indians intending to travel to Tibet; and as the Indians in the border areas had large interests in Tibetan trade, and they also valued the pilgrimages to Kailash and Mansarovar, such restric-

tions would recoil heavily on them. The IB then asked the Government of India to advise the Governments of the northern States of India bordering Tibet and Nepal to prepare and keep ready schemes to prevent infiltration of undesirable elements from Tibet into India so that these could be put into effect immediately. This was done and, on the suggestion of the IB, the Governments of Sikkim and Bhutan were also addressed in similar terms.

Thereafter the IB held several meetings at the State level and discussed the measures that would be necessary to enforce registration of Tibetans and checking infiltration, and in August, 1950, sent a detailed proposal recommending the establishment of twenty-one checkposts to guard the passes on the Indo-Tibetan frontier from Ladakh in the north-western extremity to the Lohit Division in NEFA in the north-east. One of these was to be in Ladakh in addition to the post already established, one in Punjab, two in Himachal Pradesh, six in UP, five in North Bengal, three in Sikkim and three in NEFA.

As visualised at this time, there were three aspects to this task of controlling the entry of Tibetans into India. These were: (1) prevention of infiltration into India by undesirable persons from Tibet, (2) prevention of the influx of large numbers of Tibetan refugees, many of whom might be armed, and (3) introduction of a passport system and the registration of Tibetans under the Foreigners Registration Act.

The establishment of the checkposts was meant to prevent the infiltration into India by undesirable persons from Tibet. As far as possible the checkposts would be located at the farthest inhabited villages on the approaches of the passes and each post would be staffed both with Armed Police and Intelligence staff. At this time the knowledge of all the passes, particularly in NEFA, was quite inadequate. And, moreover, the administration had gone beyond the foothills only at a few places and hence, in the circumstances prevailing in 1949, it was impossible to push up the checkposts immediately to all the passes on the McMahon Line as was done later. It was realised that it would be impossible to seal such a long frontier entirely, but yet when the checkposts would start functioning properly they would be able to reduce to

the minimum such infiltration. In any case, the presence of these checkposts would serve as a deterrent to intending infiltrators.

It would not be possible for this small staff at the checkpost to prevent the influx of large numbers of Tibetan refugees, many of whom might be armed. The Government had to decide its policy whether the refugees should be allowed to come in and, if so, whether they should be disarmed. The arrangement suggested was that as these influxes would take place along the recognised routes and passes, the checkposts would be able to get advance information in most cases and would then communicate with the District Magistrate or the Political Officer who in his turn might communicate with the military authorities and decide, after receiving Government instructions, the action to be taken in each case, whether additional troops or Armed Police would have to be sent either to disarm the refugees if they were allowed to come in or to push them back across the frontier if their entry was prohibited.

The third important question was about the registration of Tibetans and the introduction of a passport system. It was obvious that if the Chinese occupied Tibet, they would claim Chinese nationality for the Tibetans and the latter then would be subjected to the same passport regulations which had been introduced earlier for the Chinese. But across this long land-frontier, where traditional trade and intercourse between Tibetans and Indians had existed for over a thousand years, it was realised that our endeavour should be to make the operation of these rules against the Tibetans as little irksome as possible. The strict enforcement of the passport system would completey stop trade between Western Tibet and the bordering areas of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh, because it would be impossible for the Western Tibetans to walk several hundred miles to go to Lhasa and get their passports. China would not allow sub-offices to be opened for the issue of passports as we felt that the Chinese would discourage as far as possible friendly intercourse between the Tibetans and the Indians. Also Sikkim, which had a large Tibetan population, between whom and the population in Tibet there were many social contacts, would not at that time agree to

the introduction of any rigid system which might prevent such free intercourse A via media was, therefore, suggested and it was recommended by us that whilst the Tibetans present in India should be registered, they should not be asked to obtain passports. Any Tibetan coming into India would be given a permit by the checkpost and would travel to the nearest District Headquarters where he would get a registration certificate. This he would surrender at the checkpost at the time of his leaving India. It was felt that this measure for the time being would be sufficient to restrict the infiltration of undesirable elements without interfering with the traditional trade and cultural exchanges between India and Tibet. Accordingly the IB made these recommendations to the Government in August, 1950, and at a meeting held a week later, with the representatives of the External Affairs Ministry, the Ministry of States, the Home Ministry and the Army Headquarters, these proposals were accepted. The Cabinet also subsequently approved of these suggestions. Orders were not, however, immediately issued by the Ministry formally sanctioning the scheme.

In our own minds in the Intelligence Bureau we had no doubts about the Chinese intentions. We were quite clear that the Chinese would soon militarily overrun the whole of Tibet and come right up to the borders of India and also claim those parts of northern India, Bhutan, northern Burma, etc. which had been shown in Chinese maps as coming under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Emperors. The Communist world at this time understood only force and only the presence of a comparable force in Tibet could deter the Chinese from embarking on a military expedition in that country. That could only be Indian. But due to the conditions existing within the country and the border at that time it was not possible for India to intervene militarily in Tibet. It, therefore, appeared to us that within a couple of years we would find the Chinese ranged all along our 2,000-miles frontier with Tibet.

In spite of their peaceful professions, on October 7, 1950, the Chinese launched an attack on Eastern Tibet and, as mentioned earlier, were soon able to destroy the Tibetan Army and occupy

a large part of Outer Tibet which till then had been under Tibet's control. There was then nothing to stop the Chinese from pouring into Tibet and coming to our frontiers and we were quite clear in our minds that the diplomatic steps which the Government of India were taking would not stop the Chinese from acting according to their set plan. So on November 3 we drew up a long note on the new problems of internal and frontier security which would arise as a result of the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

This note had to be read in the context of the world situation as it existed at that time and also the serious internal situation prevailing in India. International Communism till then had not given up the idea of drawing India into the Communist fold and carving out a large land and population bloc consisting of Russia, China and India to confront the rest of the world. In fact, up to that time every instruction that had issued from Moscow had expressed the necessity and the importance of the Indian Communist Party to overthrow the "reactionary" Nehru Government. About this time the responsibility of directing Communist revolutionary movements in South-East Asia and India was entrusted to Mao Tse-tung, as he was considered to be more experienced in this field, and armed guerilla warfare of the type the Chinese had conducted both against the Chiang Kai-shek regime and the Japanese invaders was prescribed as the method which the Indian Communists should follow to overthrow the "bourgeois capitalist" Government. In fact, such armed struggle was being conducted with great ruthlessness in the Telengana area of Hyderabad State, in the Circars and the ceded districts of Andhra, in certain parts of Malabar, in the hill areas of Maharashtra, in certain riverine areas of West Bengal and Assam, in eastern UP and also in the tribal areas of Tripura and Manipur. The Indian Communists had been told that their weakness was that they did not have a firm rear such as the Chinese had in the Soviet Union when they had moved from South to north-west China. It was, therefore, of great concern to us that, with the Chinese coming right up to our frontiers, the opportunity would open up for the Communists of India to build bases on the frontier of Tibet and thus they would

be able to get all forms of material and moral assistance from the Chinese.

The other difficulty that we faced was the state of administration in the frontier areas, particularly in NEFA and in Ladakh. We have already seen that the British had contented themselves with merely drawing the McMahon Line, and for the next thirty years did not make any move to bring the tribes under proper administration. It was only in the middle forties that a halting attempt was made to extend the administration to short distances beyond the foothills. The tribals had been left very much to themselves, and particularly those living in the northern areas had many contacts and trade relations with the Tibetans. These tribals had not been in any way assimilated in the Indian nation and, therefore, they would become an easy prey to the Chinese, who would promise them independence of action and thus easily incite them into rebellion against the Government of India and allow firm bases to be built in these most difficult and inaccessible areas for conducting armed struggle against the Government. Even the administration in such tribal areas as the Naga Hills and the Mizo Hills was very weak and we visualised that, coming through the Kachin area of North Burma, the Chinese would even start inciting the Nagas, the Mizos and the Chins to demand secession of their territory from India. The administration in Bhutan, which was under treaty relations with India, was primitive. In any case, the Bhutanese, particularly in the northern areas, were more akin to the Tibetans than to the Indians and it would not be difficult for the Chinese to subvert their loyalty also once they were in power in Tibet, and were in a position to show better results of their administration to the people at large. Though Sikkim was more under Indian control, the security position was very weak with no troops there. Sikkim itself had a large Buddhist population with marriage, trade and social ties with Tibet. Nepal also had an oligarchic rule (of the Ranas) opposed by the people and the large Buddhist Newar population on the northern parts of Nepal could be easily subverted. In any case, Nepal did not have the means to resist any Chinese penetration into that country. Though the people of the Kumaon and the Garhwal Hills were

thoroughly Indian and had contributed considerably to the Indian Army, the administration in these areas was still primitive and the nearest district and sub-divisional posts were sometimes over 100 miles from the frontier. Therefore, small pockets could be established by the Communists in these areas also to be later developed into bases for armed struggle. The position in Himachal Pradesh and in Lahaul and Spiti areas of Punjab was much worse. In Ladakh, though during the Maharaja's time there was some form of effective control, since the ushering in of popular rule there was practically no administration outside Leh itself and the frontiers lay about 150 to 200 miles from Leh across high ranges which remained impassible for most of the year.

In our note, therefore, after pointing out all these dangers and shortcomings, we made some comprehensive recommendations mentioning that, though some of these went beyond the scope of Intelligence, they were being put forward to allow the various ministries concerned with them to work on the problems. We suggested that the administration in NEFA should be taken right up to the frontier, new districts should be opened, with the administrative boundaries coinciding with the tribal boundaries as far as possible. Instead of the old tribal system of maintaining law and order, modern methods of police administration should be introduced. The economic needs of the people should be surveyed and supplies sent from India so that they could be economically tied to India and not Tibet. Schools should be opened all over NEFA, in which both Hindi and Assamese should be taught, so that the tribals could gradually develop cultural links with the plains people. Hospitals and medical centres should be opened and philanthropic institutions such as the Ramakrishna Mission should be encouraged to open their centres in these areas. The strength of the Assam Rifles should be increased and each tribal area should be constituted into a district and it should have at least one battalion with the reserves kept at strategic places. For Manipur, Lushai Hills and Naga Hills also, we recommended that the administration should be strengthened and police stations opened in the interior. The economic needs of these areas should be studied so that for their trade they did not have to go to Paki-

stan or Burma. The Naga Hills should be brought to the same level of administration as other parts of Assam, and all these areas should be brought under the direct control of the Central Government. Bhutan's ties with India should be strengthened by changing the treaty, if necessary, and placing advisers in Bhutan's administration. More outlet for Bhutan's trade with India had to be created and educational and medical missions should be established. The new treaty should also have a clause to enable India to post troops in Bhutan to protect it from external dangers. In Sikkim, Indian control should be further tightened and the Sikkim Congress group, which still owed allegiance to the Indian National Congress, should be encouraged. Educational and medical missions should be established and administration should be brought to the level of an Indian district. A strong contingent of troops should be posted in Sikkim, as the highway from Tibet to India traversed Sikkim before entering Darjeeling district. In Nepal, the possibility of the Government accepting India's assistance to ward off dangers from the north should be probed. Nepal might be encouraged to seek the Indian Army's help to train her Army and to accept assistance in guarding the frontiers. In Kumaon and Garhwal Hills and Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, administrative control should be tightened by opening more sub-divisions under gazetted officers and starting more police stations. The economic needs of these areas had also to be studied and properly met, because they would be deprived of the traditional trade with Tibet and educational and medical facilities should be extended. In Ladakh, also, we recommended that the administration should be brought to the same level as in the rest of India and police stations should be opened in the Indus valley, and economic, educational and medical measures should be undertaken as in other areas.

Regarding the defence needs, we assumed that the Defence Ministry would be considering the problems from its own angle, but we wanted to emphasise that the Communist world at that time understood only force. We also pointed out that the defence needs of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim had to be closely studied. The presence of strong Army units near the frontier to strike back

would not only discourage any incursions from across the frontier but would also keep the hostile elements within our own borders under control. We visualised that certain re-grouping of the Indian armed forces would be necessary and some forces could be found for the Tibetan frontier by withdrawing the Commands where they were no longer required as occupation forces as in the time of the British. We also recommended that when the Army was already engaged on another front with Pakistan it would be unwise to dissipate the available strength by posting small units all over the frontier and suggested that this work of patrolling, guarding and checking the frontier might be taken over by the Assam Rifles or the State Armed Police units and the CRP (Central Reserve Police). Though the strength of all these forces had to be raised, the cost would be much less than that of the Army and they would be quite suitable for this work. We also felt that the Army could be withdrawn from areas like Telengana and Bengal, where they were operating against the Communists, and this work could also be given to the Armed Police units. This had already happened in Telengana.

Regarding communication, we pointed out that road communications in our northern frontier areas hardly existed. There was only one road which went up to Gangtok and it was jeepable only up to a few miles from there, but for the rest of the frontier area there was no motorable road within a hundred miles of the frontier. In NEFA and in Ladakh, the distances were much longer. There was also no telephone and telegraphic communication at these places. For proper security it was absolutely necessary to open up roads in all these areas and also to have a network of telephone and telegraph lines and wireless stations. Even in the British days the need for improving communications in these inaccessible areas had been recognised, but as there was no immediate danger to India's security and the expenditure involved was very high, the project, though considered necessary, had never been implemented. However, now there was great urgency of improving all forms of communications in the changed circumstances and, therefore, the development of both road and telecommunication system should be undertaken without delay.

We also recommended the setting up of a strong Intelligence network in the frontier as well as in the adjoining areas. We urged that the checkposts, which we had recommended in our earlier note and which proposal had been accepted in principle, should also be sanctioned immediately so that the staff could be in position before the Chinese reached our frontiers and were in a position to create trouble. In that connection, we also suggested that the registration of Tibetans be undertaken quickly and restrictions imposed and vigilance maintained over the large Chinese population in Calcutta, Bombay and other places, because it was within our knowledge that many of them had openly welcomed the change of regime in China.

Sardar Patel accepted these suggestions and acted quickly. On November 7, in a letter addressed to the Prime Minister, he referred to this note sent by the IB, and pointed out the dangers that India was going to face as a result of the anticipated Chinese occupation of Tibet in spite of the Government of India's protest. He endorsed all the recommendations that we had made, and, the great administrator that he was, he added other important recommendations which we had not thought of. It would be useful to reproduce the full text of this letter, because it would clearly indicate how the mind of this great leader was working and how he visualised the threat to India's security. The letter* addressed to Shri Jawaharlal Nehru on November 7, 1950, was as follows :

"Ever since my return from Ahmedabad and after the Cabinet meeting the same day which I had to attend at practically fifteen minutes' notice and for which I regret I was not able to read all the papers, I have been anxiously thinking over the problem of Tibet and I thought I should share with you what is passing through my mind.

"2. I have carefully gone through the correspondence between

* Published in full by K.M. Munshi in *Bhavan's Journal*, Vol. XIII, No. 16, dated February 26, 1967. This was also quoted by Dalvi in his book, *The Himalayan Blunder*, and by Kuldip Nayar in his book, *Between the Lines*. Their source, though not mentioned, must have been *Bhavan's Journal*.

the External Affairs Ministry and our Ambassador in Peking and through him the Chinese Government. I have tried to peruse this correspondence as favourably to our Ambassador and the Chinese Government as possible, but, I regret to say that neither of them comes out well as a result of this study. The Chinese Government have tried to delude us by professions of peaceful intentions. My own feeling is that at a crucial period they managed to instil into our Ambassador a false sense of confidence in their so-called desire to settle the Tibetan problem by peaceful means. There can be no doubt that, during the period covered by this correspondence, the Chinese must have been concentrating for an onslaught on Tibet. The final action of the Chinese, in my judgment, is little short of perfidy. The tragedy of it is that the Tibetans put faith in us; they chose to be guided by us; and we have been unable to get them out of the meshes of Chinese diplomacy or Chinese malevolence. From the latest position, it appears that we shall not be able to rescue the Dalai Lama. Our Ambassador has been at great pains to find an explanation or justification for Chinese policy and actions. As the External Affairs Ministry remarked in one of their telegrams, there was a lack of firmness and unnecessary apology in one or two representations that he made to the Chinese Government on our behalf. It is impossible to imagine any sensible person believing in the so-called threat to China from Anglo-American machinations in Tibet. Therefore, if the Chinese put faith in this, they must have distrusted us so completely as to have taken us as tools or stooges of Anglo-American diplomacy or strategy. This feeling, if genuinely entertained by the Chinese in spite of your direct approaches to them, indicates that, even though we regard ourselves as the friends of China, the Chinese do not regard us as their friends. With the Communist mentality of "whoever is not with them being against them", this is a significant pointer, of which we have to take due note. During the last several months, outside the Russian camp, we have practically been alone in championing the cause of Chinese entry into the UNO and in securing from the Americans assurances on the question of Formosa. We have done everything

we could to assuage Chinese feelings, to allay its apprehensions and to defend its legitimate claims, in our discussions and correspondence with America and Britain and in the UNO. In spite of this, China is not convinced about our disinterestedness; it continues to regard us with suspicion and the whole psychology is one, at least outwardly, of scepticism, perhaps mixed with a little hostility. I doubt if we can go any further than we have done already to convince China of our good intentions, friendliness and goodwill. In Peking we have an Ambassador who is eminently suitable for putting across the friendly point of view. Even he seems to have failed to convert the Chinese. Their last telegram to us is an act of gross discourtesy not only in the summary way it disposes of our protest against the entry of Chinese forces into Tibet but also in the wild insinuation that our attitude is determined by foreign influences. It looks as though it is not a friend speaking in that language but a potential enemy.

"3. In the background of this, we have to consider what new situation now faces us as a result of the disappearance of Tibet, as we know it, and the expansion of China almost up to our gates. Throughout history, we have seldom been worried about our north-east frontier. The Himalayas had been regarded as an impenetrable barrier against any threat from the north. We had a friendly Tibet which gave us no trouble. The Chinese were divided. They had their own domestic problems and never bothered us about our frontiers. In 1914, we entered into a Convention with Tibet which was not endorsed by the Chinese. We seem to have regarded Tibetan autonomy as extending to independent treaty relationships. Presumably, all that we required was Chinese counter-signature. The Chinese interpretation of suzerainty seems to be different. We can, therefore, safely assume that very soon they will disown all the stipulations which Tibet has entered into with us in the past. That throws into the melting pot all frontier and commercial settlements with Tibet on which we have been functioning and acting during the last half a century. China is no longer divided. It is united and strong. All along the Himalayas in the north and north-east, we have, on our side of the frontier, a population ethnologically and culturally not different from

Tibetans or Mongoloids. The undefined state of the frontier and the existence on our side of a population with its affinities to Tibetans or Chinese have all the elements of potential trouble between China and ourselves. Recent and bitter history also tells us that Communism is no shield against imperialism and that Communists are as good or as bad imperialists as any other. Chinese ambitions in this respect not only cover the Himalayan slopes on our side but also include important parts of Assam. They have their ambitions in Burma also. Burma has the added difficulty that it has no McMahon Line round which to build up even the semblance of an agreement. Chinese irredentism and Communist imperialism are different from the expansionism or imperialism of the Western Powers. The former has a cloak of ideology which makes it ten times more dangerous. In the guise of ideological expansion lie concealed racial, national and historical claims. The danger from the north and north-east, therefore, becomes both communist and imperialist. While our western and north-western threats to security are still as prominent as before, a new threat has developed from the north and north-east. Thus, for the first time, after centuries, India's defence has to concentrate itself on two fronts simultaneously. Our defence measures have so far been based on the calculations of a superiority over Pakistan. In our calculations we shall now have to reckon with Communist China in the north and north-east—Communist China which has definite ambitions and aims and which does not, in any way, seem friendly disposed towards us.

"4. Let me also consider the political considerations on this potentially troublesome frontier. Our northern or north-eastern approaches consist of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and the tribal areas in Assam. From the point of view of communications they are weak spots. Continuous defensive lines do not exist. There is almost an unlimited scope for infiltration. Police protection is limited to a very small number of passes. There too, our outposts do not seem to be fully manned. The contact of these areas with us is, by no means, close and intimate. The people inhabiting these portions have no established loyalty or devotion to India. Even Darjeeling and Kalimpong areas are not free

from pro-Mongoloid prejudices. During the last three years, we have not been able to make any appreciable approaches to the Nagas and other hill tribes in Assam. European missionaries and other visitors had been in touch with them, but their influence was, in no way, friendly to India or Indians. In Sikkim, there was political ferment some time ago. It is quite possible that discontent is smouldering there. Bhutan is comparatively quiet, but its affinity with Tibetans would be a handicap. Nepal has a weak oligarchic regime based almost entirely on force; it is in conflict with a turbulent element of the population as well as with enlightened ideas of the modern age. In the circumstances, to make people alive to the new danger or to make them defensively strong is a very difficult task indeed, and that difficulty can be got over only by enlightened firmness, strength and a clear line of policy. I am sure the Chinese and their source of inspiration, Soviet Russia, would not miss any opportunity of exploiting these weak spots, partly in support of their ideology and partly in support of their ambitions. In my judgment, therefore, the situation is one in which we cannot afford either to be complacent or to be vacillating. We must have a clear idea of what we wish to achieve and also of the methods by which we should achieve it. Any faltering or lack of decisiveness in formulating our objectives or in pursuing our policy to attain those objectives is bound to weaken us and increase the threats which are so evident.

"5. Side by side with these external dangers we shall now have to face serious internal problems as well. I have already asked Iengar to send to the External Affairs Ministry a copy of the Intelligence Bureau's appreciation of these matters. Hitherto, the Communist Party of India has found some difficulty in contacting Communists abroad, or in getting supplies of arms, literature, etc. from them. They had to contend with difficult Burmese and Pakistan frontiers on the east or with the long seaboard. They shall now have a comparatively easy means of access to Chinese Communists and through them to other foreign Communists. Infiltration of spies, fifth columnists and Communists would now be easier. Instead of having to deal with

isolated Communist pockets in Telengana and Warangal we may have to deal with Communist threats to our security along our northern and north-eastern frontiers where, for supplies of arms and ammunition, they can safely depend on Communist arsenals in China. The whole situation thus raises a number of problems on which we must come to an early decision so that we can, as said earlier, formulate the objectives of our policy and decide the methods by which those actions will have to be fairly comprehensive involving not only our defence strategy and state of preparation but also problems of internal security to deal with which we have not a moment to lose. We shall also have to deal with administrative and political problems in the weak spots along the frontier to which I have already referred.

"6. It is, of course, impossible for me to be exhaustive in setting out all these problems. I am, however, giving below some of the problems, which, in my opinion, require early solution and round which we have to build our administrative or military policies and measures to implement them:

(*a*) A military and intelligence appreciation of the Chinese threat to India both on the frontier and to internal security.

(*b*) An examination of our military position and such redisposition of our forces as might be necessary, particularly with the idea of guarding important routes or areas which are likely to be the subject of dispute.

(*c*) An appraisement of the strength of our forces and, if necessary, reconsideration of our retrenchment plans for the Army in the light of these new threats.

(*d*) A long-term consideration of our defence needs. My own feeling is that, unless we assure our supplies of arms, ammunition and armour, we would be making our defence position perpetually weak and we would not be able to stand up to the double threat of difficulties both from the west and north-west and north and north-east.

(*e*) The question of Chinese entry into UNO. In view of the rebuff which China has given us and the method which it

has followed in dealing with Tibet, I am doubtful whether we can advocate its claims any longer. There would probably be a threat in the UNO virtually to outlaw China, in view of its active participation in the Korean War. We must determine our attitude on this question also.

(*f*) The political and administrative steps which we should take to strengthen our northern and north-eastern frontiers. This would include the whole of the border, i.e. Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and the Tribal territory in Assam.

(*g*) Measures of internal security in the border areas as well as the States flanking those areas such as UP, Bihar, Bengal and Assam.

(*h*) Improvement of our communications, road, rail, air and wireless in these areas, and with the frontier outposts.

(*i*) Policing and intelligence of frontier posts.

(*j*) The future of our mission at Lhasa and the trade posts at Gyantse and Yatung and the forces which we have in operation in Tibet to guard the trade routes.

(*k*) The policy in regard to the McMahon Line.

"7. These are some of the questions which occur to my mind. It is possible that consideration of these matters may lead us into wider questions of our relationship with China, Russia, America, Britain and Burma. This, however, would be of a general nature, though some might be basically very important, e.g., we might have to consider whether we should not enter into closer association with Burma in order to strengthen the latter in its dealings with China. I do not rule out the possibility that, before applying pressure on us, China might apply pressure on Burma. With Burma, the frontier is entirely undefined and the Chinese territorial claims are more substantial. In its present position, Burma might offer an easier problem for China and, therefore, might claim its first attention.

"8. I suggest that we meet early to have a general discussion on these problems and decide on such steps as we might think to be immediately necessary and direct quick examination of other

problems with a view to taking early measures to deal with them."

An insinuation has been made in the *Bhavan's Journal* and also by implication in Dalvi's and Nayar's books that this warning by Sardar Patel was not heeded by Pandit Nehru and this led to the continued insecurity in our northern frontiers. I do not know whether any Cabinet meeting was held to discuss the Sardar's letter, but the note sent by the Intelligence Bureau on "New Problems of Internal Security" and the letter sent by Sardar Patel were considered by all the Ministries concerned within the next seven days and the following decisions were taken:

(1) A small committee of military experts with a representative of the IB in Shillong would visit the NEFA agencies and propose the places near the frontier at which the Assam Rifles units should be posted.

(2) A high-powered committee presided over by the Deputy Minister of Defence, Major-General Himmatsinghji, with representatives of Defence, Communication, Home, External Affairs and the IB would be formed to study the problems created by the Chinese aggression in Tibet and to make recommendations about the measures that should be taken to improve administration, defence, communication, etc. of all the frontier areas.

(3) The Government also formally sanctioned the Indo-Tibet checkpost staff and wireless communication for them.

(4) The registration of Tibetans was also sanctioned as also the imposition of restrictions under the Foreigners' Registration Rules on the Chinese residents of India.

(5) Our other recommendations regarding expansion of intelligence set-up were also discussed and accepted in principle leaving the IB and the Home Ministry to work out the details.

We also realised that the Darjeeling-Kalimpong-Gangtok area would develop into a source of international espionage and the subversive activities of the Communists and other foreign agents

would increase. We, therefore, opened an office immediately in Kalimpong, and subsidiary offices in Darjeeling and Gangtok. We also warned the CIDs of Assam and Bengal to improve their coverage of foreigners' activities in North Bengal and Assam valley, and it is to the credit of these States that, even though hard pressed in many other directions, they responded quickly and improved their organisations and maintained fruitful liaison with the IB.

Earlier when the scheme for frontier checkposts had been accepted, we had also impressed on the Government that no security measures for northern India could be anything near perfect unless the passes between Tibet on one side and Bhutan and Nepal on the other were properly guarded. The working out of a scheme, so far as Bhutan was concerned, was left to the Political Officer, Gangtok, but for one reason or the other this did not materialise for nearly a decade. But, after consulting our Ambassador in Nepal, a Deputy Director from the IB, Waryam Singh, was sent to Nepal and he had a very fruitful discussion with the Maharaja, who was then the Prime Minister. The Maharaja took some time to consider the offer made by us to assist Nepal to open checkposts on the Nepal-Tibet frontier. These checkposts were subsequently opened and manned jointly by Indian and Nepalese staff. The number of posts was further increased and the staff expanded at the time of the Koirala Government.

9 The Quest for Security

THE HIMMATSINGHJI COMMITTEE was a well-balanced team and, besides Major-General Himmatsinghji, Deputy Minister of Defence, as the chairman, included Lt.-General Kulwant Singh, Corps Commander, K. Zakaria, Head of the Historical Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, S.N. Haksar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, and Group Capt. M.S. Chaturvedi from the Indian Air Force as members. Waryam Singh, Deputy Director of the Intelligence Bureau, was also on this Committee and represented both the Intelligence Bureau and the Home Ministry. This Committee, which was called the North and North-East Border Defence Committee,* went into action immediately and sent its report in two parts. The first part consisted of its recommendations regarding Sikkim, Bhutan, NEFA and the Eastern frontier bordering Burma. This part was submitted in April, 1951. The second part contained the recommendations on Ladakh and the frontier regions of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Nepal and was submitted in September, 1951. Actually the second part was held up to receive the recommendation of another Committee headed by Major-General Thorat, which had been set up to assess the security needs of Nepal and its requirements of Indian assistance—and this latter Committee submitted its report in August, 1951. The Himmatsinghji Committee also had before it the recommendations which had been made by a smaller Committee formed in Assam to assess the dangers in NFFA and suggest the possibility of pushing the Assam Rifles Posts as far towards the frontier as possible.

The North and North-East Border Defence Committee care-

* Referred to by Kavic in his book *India's Quest for Security* and Mankekar in *Guilty Men of 1962*.

fully analysed the nature of the frontier, the contending claims, the general situation in the border areas, the state of the administration and the appreciation of the threat. On the basis of this analysis, it laid down the principles of policy to be followed. Thereafter it made comprehensive recommendations under various heads, such as (1) Administration, (2) Development, (3) Defence and Security which included the Army and the Air Force, (4) the Civil Armed Forces including the Assam Rifles and other police units, (5) Communications, and (6) Intelligence.

With regard to the state of the frontier and the contending claims, the Committee found the position very much the same as has been described in Chapter 7, though at that time the knowledge about the alignment of the frontier was not as accurate as it was after the study made in 1960-61. Regarding the threats and dangers from this undemarcated frontier, the state of administration in these areas and also the threats and dangers arising out of the Chinese presence in Tibet, the Committee came to the same conclusion as had been drawn by the IB in its note of November, 1950, and also Sardar Patel's letter which has been quoted in the previous Chapter.

Under the head "administration", the Committee recommended the rearrangement of the administrative divisions of NEFA, opening of new districts, sub-divisions and bases, considerable increase in staff for manning new posts, the extension of these administrative centres further into the interior, a careful selection of officers and the formation of a Frontier Service cadre for service in the frontier areas. Regarding "development works", the Committee recommended large-scale expansion of welfare activities amongst the tribal people so as to win their goodwill and make them feel one with India. These would include the provision of medical facilities by opening new hospitals at several places and educational facilities by opening a number of high schools. For the economic development of the region, appointment of agricultural overseers for instruction and demonstration and provision of better seeds and breeds of cattle were recommended. For "defence and security", the recommendations included the reorganisation and re-deployment of the military

forces in this area, some increase in Infantry and supporting arms, the development of certain airfields and the setting up of a radar network on the eastern frontier. The Committee recommended considerable increase in the Assam Rifles and the Civil Armed Police and the deployment of the Assam Rifles and other Armed Police units in larger concentration at strategic points from which effective patrolling could be regularly undertaken. Under the head "Intelligence", the Committee recommended the abolition of the Military Intelligence Organisation in the field because of its ineffectiveness and its amalgamation wih the IB, the reorganisation of the SIB's at Calcutta and Shillong, the opening of checkposts as near the frontier as possible to cover a maximum number of passes and the setting up of an Intelligence Corps. For "communications", the recommendations included the construction and improvement of roads and tracks to link all the administrative and Assam Rifles posts with headquarters and increased use of air transport for movement of personnel and supplies.

For Naga Hills, Manipur and Lushai Hills, all of which had borders with Burma, the Committee suggested the unification of the administration under one directing head, improvement of administration by opening new sub-divisions and police stations and opening up of road communications.

For the north-western area from Ladakh up to the west of Nepal, the Committee, having pointed out that the frontier was undemarcated, made the following recommendations. Under "administration" the recommendation was that the State Governments should extend modern administration right up to the frontier and, without interfering with the customs and the ways of life of the border people, should bring to them the benefits of a better and quicker administration. For "development", the Committee suggested the opening of new schools and dispensaries and the introduction of better agricultural methods and the supply of essential commodities at cheap rates. Regarding "defence", it suggested the strengthening of the Ladakh Militia, earmarking of troops for the Uttar Pradesh frontier area and the development of Srinagar and Jammu as proper air bases. The Committee recommended a large increase in the Civil Armed Police for

patrolling and law and order duties and for the defence of the frontier. Under "Intelligence", the Committee recommended the abolition of Military Intelligence in the field and its amalgamation with Civil Intelligence, strengthening of the SIB at Amritsar and the creation of an Intelligence Corps. For "communications", it recommended the immediate construction of good roads all over the frontier.

With regard to Nepal, on the basis of the Thorat Committee's recommendations, this Committee also recommended that the Nepal Government should be persuaded to survey the frontier and passes, establish checkposts where necessary, extend effective control to the remote areas, improve the road system and reorganise the Nepalese Army on modern lines. It stressed that the defence of India was not possible without the defence of Nepal. For Sikkim and Bhutan, the recommendations were on similar lines.

The recommendations of this Committee were all accepted in principle by the Cabinet and thereafter each department was asked to implement them so far as they related to it. The Cabinet Secretariat was supposed to be the coordinating authority, but most of the work was done by the departments concerned. A progress report used to be sent to the Cabinet Secretariat once in a while but elicited no comments.

The Himmatsinghji Committee's report served as a timely eye-opener to the Centre and the States and the central departments that had anything to do with the administration and security of these frontier regions. For the first time the grave shortcomings in our administration and security measures in these regions were brought to light forcefully and this left no doubt in anyone's mind as to what was required and what should be done to overcome these deficiencies. But the departments responsible for implementing these recommendations faced almost insurmountable difficulties. And the greatest difficulty was due to the nature of the terrain itself. In NEFA, for example, as one went towards the frontier starting from the railhead in the Brahmaputra valley, which was practically at sea-level, one had to go through deep and at many places almost impenetrable forests, cross many

rivers and several ranges of hills and ascend the passes ranging in height from 14,000 to 18,000 feet, which were snowbound for over six months of the year. As one proceeded northwards, the climate changed from the hot and moist of the valley and the lower foothills to the freezing cold of the passes. And not only that; the entire south-west monsoon, coming from the Bay of Bengal and entering the Brahmaputra Valley, emptied itself in NEFA giving it an annual rainfall of nearly 200", washing away all semblances of tracks and roads and reducing visibility, except from the months of October to March, very often to nil. Earlier accounts of NEFA, written by several British travellers, had pointed out that the soil was so unstable that a track prepared a year earlier just melted away during the rains and could not be traced again. The severe earthquake of 1950 had demolished even many hilltops and had made the entire hillside very unstable. The jungles were full of leeches and these made the lot of travellers miserable. No food was available on the way as the population was scarce and the villagers were not willing to part with their meagre stocks for money. So the logistic arrangements required for moving even a small unit northwards were formidable. The British had left these hill people alone and had not encouraged their assimilation in the main life-stream of Assam and hence many of the tribals were not disposed kindly to the plains people, officials or non-officials, intruding into their areas.

Even in areas like Kumaon and Garhwal Hills and Himachal Pradesh the heights to be traversed were up to about thirteen to fourteen thousand feet starting from about three to four thousand. Though the rainfall here was not as heavy as in NEFA, it was heavy enough to make communication difficult due to large landslides. Though the population in these areas was not unfriendly like that of NEFA, yet logistic difficulties were great and increased as one approached the frontier. In Ladakh, the distances to the frontier in all directions were great and one had to cross several ranges of mountains through passes seventeen to eighteen thousand feet in height to reach the frontier which was on the Tibetan plateau.

For the plains people, heights up to seven to eight thousand

feet are manageable, though even at these heights the cold in winter demands special measures for protection. But things are quite different at the higher reaches. The entire body mechanism gets upset and breathing, sleep and digestion, all become difficult. The cold, particularly in winter, is intolerable and in the frontier regions of Ladakh the temperature drops thirty degrees below the freezing point. Dehydration leads to rapid physical deterioration. It is, of course, possible for even plains people to slowly acclimatise themselves to these heights and the cold but even at the best of times, over seventy-five per cent of one's energy is spent in the effort to survive leaving hardly any reserves of power, physical or mental, which can be pressed into service during emergencies. And except in Ladakh and Lahaul and Spiti, there are no areas on the Indian side of the frontier where large bodies of men can acclimatise themselves. Mostly they have to work at heights of three to seven thousand feet and so, when they are suddenly called upon to rush to the frontier, they are physically quite unfit for any heavy and difficult work when they ultimately reach the destination. It is because of these difficulties that the British Government had left these frontier regions alone. Even in Nepal and Bhutan, the position as regards the frontier was similar and the Nepal Government did not even know how many passes existed between Nepal and Tibet.

It may be asked whether the position of the Chinese in Tibet was any different. Superficially it would seem to be similar but in actual fact their position was incomparably better. First of all unlike the Indians, who come from a warm climate, the Chnese come from a cold country and North China is much colder than even Tibet. So cold has little adverse effect on the Chinese. They ascend the Tibetan plateau near Sining or Tachienlu well within Chinese territory where the slopes are gradual and do not face any opposition at these places. And once they have reached the plateau they are literally on the roof of the world with a large area of over 5,00,000 sq. miles between 14,000 to 16,000 feet in height, which give them enough scope for acclimatisation. The climate is dry and healthy and troops require no protection against rainfall. Road-making and building of air strips are simple processes

and miles and miles of road can be laid out simply by demarcating the alignment with stones. The ground is hard and generally smooth and so motor vehicles can be driven sometimes over hundreds of miles without undertaking any heavy engineering work. Similarly, air strips can be laid out at many places. And, once the roads and air strips are laid, there is hardly any wear and tear casued by climatic conditions as there is little rainfall and very little snow due to the absence of humidity.

The physical difficulties will remain permanently on our side so long as the watershed of the Himalayas remains our boundary. There was much sense in the late Ram Manohar Lohia's claim that we should extend our frontier to the Brahmaputra (or the Tsang-po) River in Tibet. It is only then that the Indian troops can meet the Chinese on more equal terms so far as physical condition and acclimatisation are concerned. Otherwise, we shall always be at a disadvantage. The tired, exhausted and breathless Indian troops, as they trudge up to the frontier, will have to face fully acclimatised Chinese troops. And coming down the slopes from the frontier passes will be no trouble for the latter. So the fight in such circumstances will always be unequal. Only those who have to work at these heights and in these jungles can understand the tremendous difficulties they face. There should be a proper appreciation of these difficulties all over the country to avoid wrong comparisons and analogies and hasty conclusions.

However, whatever the difficulties, these had to be met and surmounted and they could not deter a country from taking steps necessary to protect the frontier, however hard and dangerous that work might be. The country had to secure its frontiers and this could be done by the Indians alone. Foreign assistance, even if given wihout strings, could be only marginal. No doubt such assistance could be useful in some technical fields like Radar but the main physical effort to protect the frontier had to come from within the country. It called for almost superhuman endurance, but there could be no turning back and no hesitation in undertaking this hard and arduous task.

In this long quest for security, the Intelligence Bureau also had

to play no insignificant part. It had to secure the frontiers by pushing the checkposts throughout this northern frontier right up to the McMahon Line in NEFA and to the claimed frontier in the other areas, whether delimited and demarcated or not. The average height at which these posts had to be located was about twelve to fourteen thousand feet, but in Ladakh they were generally above fifteen thousand feet. The Intelligence Bureau had to collect Intelligence about the Chinese forces in Tibet, whatever might be the difficulty of running sources in this difficult area. It was not only difficult for the posts merely to exist but the staff had a hard time making themselves acceptable to the local population, not all of whom, particularly in NEFA, were at the beginning favourably disposed towards them. The presence of the checkpost certainly curtailed their liberty a great deal and they could no longer move across the frontier as they liked and this they strongly resented. Also bereft of the facilities for border trade, these people were facing some real hardship as the Government could not immediately create alternative outlets. It was not easy to get the required number of young men both educated and capable of receiving new ideas and at the same time ready to undertake this arduous task of manning the checkposts, where they would be completely cut off from all civilisation for practically the total period of their stay. If anybody fell ill, only God and nature could take care of him. Food supplies were scarce everywhere and in Chini, Lahaul and Ladakh even fuel was not available. The only means of communication with base camps was with old radio sets of the World War II vintage, pulled out of the army disposal stocks, and there were not enough sets to go round. Breakdowns were frequent and even if spares were available at bases it often took more than a month for the mechanic to visit the station to put the set right. And if he could not do it on the spot, he had to bring it down to the base workshop for repairs and send it back to the post. All this time the post would remain without any reliable means of communications. Couriers could function only during good weather.

My intention is not to highlight the difficulties faced by the Intelligence Bureau; every other department had to face these diffi-

culties and probably the roads organisation had the most difficult task. Taking the administration into the frontier by the NEFA authorities and also other areas like Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh was equally difficult. Maintaining supplies for troops was a colossal task. Even if the troops could march to their destination, their supplies had to be carried and, when supplies were required for large bodies of men, the logistics problem became very difficult. But I can speak with personal knowledge only about the work that the Intelligence Bureau had to do, and this would give a good idea of the difficulties which all other departments had also to face in implementing the recommendations of the Himmatsinghji Committee. That Committee had properly appreciated the difficulties and had deliberately understated the requirements both because large targets were not immediately attainable and because of the utmost need of economy those days.

As a result of the Committee's recommendation, the IB was made responsible for foreign strategic intelligence. We had no experience in the field and had to start from scratch. We had to train Instructors first. Fortunately a friendly country helped and a few Instructors were trained in that country. They then trained other Instructors. A training school had to be set up and we utilised some dilapidated buildings for setting up our institution. We had to build up an Intelligence Corps. The Intelligence Bureau itself was a very small organisation and had to depend entirely on deputationists from the States in those days. It was impossible to get the required number of police officers with qualifications required for the posts and who would be willing to sacrifice their comfortable work in the plains within the environments of their own people and go to the frontier where only blood and toil and ultimately ill-health and probably death awaited them. Some liberal allowances were given, but even these were not enough. Moreover, the States themselves were in difficulty in those days and, in spite of their willingness to help, could produce very few suitable officers to meet the needs of the Intelligence Bureau. Therefore, we had to take recourse to direct recruitment at the lowest intelligence-collecting level, i.e. the Assistant Central Intelligence Officer. Because a new type of officer

was needed with good education and broad outlook, we confined our recruitment only to Honours Graduates, who were physically and mentally fit and alert and were willing to undertake this hard work. So rigorous used to be the selection that we could get hardly twenty suitable men out of about eight to ten thousand who used to apply in response to the advertisement issued by the Home Ministry every six months. Then we had to put them through a long course of training, both institutional and in the field, which lasted for three years before we could actually send them to independent posts for intelligence collection. We had not only to train these officers in the technical work of intelligence but had also to train them in the languages spoken in the various areas where they had to serve. They had also to acquire a working knowledge of Chinese and Tibetan. Fortunately at this time we had a Home Secretary, H.V.R. Iengar, and a Deputy Secretary, A.K. Ghoshal, who fully understood and appreciated the needs of the Intelligence Bureau and the difficulties it had to surmount to attain its objectives, and they went all out to help us.

The task of collecting the subordinate staff for the Assistant Central Intelligence Officer, a major percentage of whom had to be locals, also presented difficulties. These people, particularly those from NEFA, were not willing to serve in security posts. However, gradually as confidence was gained, this difficulty was overcome. Their training was also difficult as they spoke only the tribal dialects.

Another important problem was the opening of tele-communications. The checkpost must be in a position to send to the base all the reports either of intelligence or otherwise. Sending them by hand would even in good weather conditions take a month or more in most cases and could not be done at all when the weather was foul as in winter or during rains. Yet the intelligence had to come promptly to the collecting centre to be of any use and the only way this could be done was to equip each post with a wireless set. The difficulty was two-fold. There was much difficulty in getting the technical staff who would volunteer to work at these places. So after unsuccessfully trying to borrow staff in

adequate numbers from the States and also from the central organisations, we were forced to recruit graduates in Physics or Mathematics as wireless operators and then put them through a rigorous course of training lasting for nearly eighteen months to make them both operators and mechanics. It would be difficult always and impossible during certain months to send any mechanics from outside to the checkposts and so the need was for an operator-mechanic at the post who could do most of the repairs on the spot and knew the art of improvisation. To give this combined training we had to set up a training school. We found that it was difficult to get even fifteen willing men in any batch suitable for our requirements. Moreover, there was much demand in the country for such technical staff and after training they could easily get better jobs at higher scales of pay in the various States and commercial firms. The checkposts had no electricity and, therefore, normal sets were of no use; only battery-fed sets could be used. The batteries had to be recharged regularly and so charging engines were required, for which gasolene and lubricating oil was needed. All these had to be man-hauled over long distances. We could not even open up any communications for the first three or four years and then slowly the work started gaining momentum. To get really efficient service, we required hand-operated sets and these were available only in the USA or Japan—hard currency areas in those days. So we had to make do with heavy and crude World War II disposal stocks. We had to set up a workshop to adapt these sets to our specific needs.

When we started building up the Intelligence Corps, we found that in spite of the long borders and of centuries of friendly relations between India and Tibet and of Indian religion and culture having permeated all strata of that country thoroughly, there were very few educated Indians who could speak or write Tibetan, and those who could talk and write Chinese did not number even half a dozen. Yet the entire work on the frontier had to be done in Tibetan and a knowledge of Chinese was also essential for intelligence purposes. So we gathered whatever talent was available in the country to set up institutions for training in Tibetan and Chinese, and in the course of the decade

following we were able to build up a sufficiently strong cadre to meet our immediate requirements, and thereafter the progress was quicker and we were able to face the later developments which took place from 1960 onwards.

It is no secret that all intelligence organisations in the world depend a great deal on monitoring of enemy messages, and we also started on that line. But though the messages could be monitored, the difficulty was that all of them were in Chinese codes. First of all the Chinese language itself is a code, which is passed over the wireless only in numbers, and when that is put in another code it really becomes a triple code. So we had not only to build up a big language section but also a very large cryptography section to decipher the large number of messages intercepted by our monitoring stations. Gradually the reception, decoding and interpretation of these messages started improving and, as in all countries, it became one of the main foundations of our intelligence work.

It is not within the scope of this book, nor would it be proper to give the details of the various ranks of staff that was employed in the various checkposts and the identity of the checkposts themselves as they were established one after the other beginning from 1950. As we went into the field, and progressed towards the frontier, we discovered many unguarded passes, routes and tracks. So our commitm. ts went on increasing year after year. The following account would give a fair idea of the increasing work load that we had to undertake during this decade.

In 1949, the IB had no staff on the northern frontier. In 1950, as mentioned earlier, the first post was opened in Leh and the staff consisted of only four. The scheme, which was sanctioned by the Government in 1950, consisted of twenty-one checkposts, excluding the one already established in Ladakh, and these were all set up by the beginning of 1951. Some further increases were made after the receipt of the Himmatsinghji Committee Report, and by the end of 1952, 30 checkposts were in operation in the frontier, of which 7 were in Ladakh, 4 in Punjab-Himachal Pradesh, 6 in UP, 5 in Sikkim and 8 in NEFA. The total staff employed numbered 108, almost entirely drawn from the State Police except

in the case of Sikkim where the staff was provided by the IB. Besides that, the IB gave a sprinkilng of staff in Ladakh and NEFA. By the end of 1954, whereas the number of checkposts remained practically stationary in other areas, in UP the number went up staff from 6 to 14. As many of the deficiencies were made up the total staff employed increased to 229.

It was only in 1956 that the staff which the IB had commenced recruiting directly from 1951-52 started becoming available, and a big change-over from the State Police to the IB in the manning of the posts started at this time. Whereas by 1958 the IB took over the entire work in Ladakh, Sikkim and in NEFA, it was in no position yet to take over the work in the rest of the frontier till after 1960 and the State Police continued to function. In fact, even after 1964, the State Police continued to function in Uttar Pradesh. It must be said to the credit of the State Police staff that, though suddenly moved from their normal police work in the plains to checkpost and intelligence work in the forbidding frontiers, they adjusted themselves well and produced much useful result. They were the pioneers who carried the torch which lighted the way for the others who followed later. In 1956, only two posts were added in Himachal Pradesh, otherwise the number remained the same in other places. However, the deficiencies were further made up with the availability of IB staff and the total number of those employed rose to 378. In 1958, 14 posts were added in NEFA bringing the total to 22. In other States there was no change. The total staff employed rose to 650. Also, for the first time wireless communication was established for the Sikkim posts; the others were still dependening on couriers.

A large expansion took place after 1959 when the Chinese started showing aggressive intentions, and by 1960 the total number of posts had risen to 67—9 in Ladakh, 9 in Himachal Pradesh-Punjab, 17 in UP, 10 in Sikkim and 22 in NEFA, the total staff employed being 1,334. Re-adjustments and further strengthening were taking place all through this troublesome period and by 1962 the number of posts had risen to 77 employing 1590 personnel. Wireless communication was also provided for the posts in Ladakh and a few posts in NEFA. With more staff

becoming available and with further threats looming across the frontier, there were further increases in NEFA where by the end of 1964 there were 33 posts, and in Sikkim there were 12, and the total staff employed was 2,154. There have been further increases since then, but it is unnecessary to go into their details in this book. Also, by the end of 1962, over fifty per cent of the posts had been provided with tele-communications, and by the end of 1964 the provision was almost cent per cent. Before 1962, the wireless sets were old and breakdowns were frequent. Only when foreign assistance became available after 1962 was it possible to change over to modern sets in the majority of the posts.

We did not have any difficulty in getting sanctions for the posts whenever we asked for an increase. The real difficulty was in getting suitable types of officers and men to man these posts where the difficulties of living in those days were really great. There was no point in getting a large number of posts sanctioned without our ability to fill them up adequately. So we had to plan our expansion programme in keeping with our capacity to produce young officers, educated, well trained and willing to serve in these most inhospitable places. As our commitments were increasing in other directions also, not more than fifty per cent of our production in any one year could be earmarked for the northern frontier. It is not possible to mass-produce Intelligence Officers and it would have been most dangerous to undertake any such experiment. In any organisation in the world this takes time. One of the old sayings of the British Intelligence is that "it requires 15 years to build up an intelligence organisation". With the best efforts we had put in, we took 12 years to do so. There was also difficulty in finding the equipment.

Casualties there were many amongst the checkpost staff. There were illnesses, deaths, family tragedies, and even insanity due to loneliness. But the men stood their ground and did not desert. The country should give due recognition to these pioneers who surmounted all physical, climatic and environmental difficulties and worked singlemindedly for the security of the motherland. They were able to hold out because of their lofty sense of patriotism and high sense of duty.

The other departments too which had to expand in the frontier areas faced equally difficult problems. As mentioned earlier, for NEFA the British had left only two part-time Political Officers based in the Assam plains. Immediately after Independence, NEFA was divided into four political agencies with the Political Officers still living in the plains. In 1948, there was a rational distribution and five divisions came into existence, which were re-named Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap. It was only in 1950 that the first move was made to take the administrative headquarters into the NEFA itself when the headquarters of the Subansiri area was moved from North Lakhimpur to Kimin just at the entrance of NEFA. In 1952, the headquarters of this division was moved from Kimin to Ziro, and that of Lohit to Tezu. In 1954, the final redistribution took place and this arrangement exists till today. So instead of two part-time Political Officers before 1947, both living outside NEFA, there came into existence five Political Officers who were later redesignated Deputy Commissioners, all living within their jurisdictions. Simultaneously the number of Additional Political Officers, Assistant Political Officers, Grade I and Grade II and Base Superintendents was increased. The total increase can be judged from the fact that in the rank of the Base Superintendent alone, whereas before 1951 there used to be only one in each of the five agencies, by 1962 the number had gone up to 132.

NEFA administration also faced much difficulty in finding suitable and willing officers. For the senior officers, a separate cadre for the frontier areas called the Indian Frontier Administrative Service was created and recruits were selected from amongst volunteers from the various services. A large subordinate staff had to be selected and trained. Buildings were required all over NEFA to accommodate these Administrative Officers and much of the material required for their construction had to be transported from the nearest railhead, sometimes over a hundred miles away.

As regards development work in NEFA, the following figures would show the work that was done. In 1947, there were only three lower primary schools throughout the whole of NEFA with a total of 50 students. By 1962, the total number of educational

institutions had risen to 211 with a total enrolment of 9,900. These included a teachers' training institute, 6 higher secondary or high schools, 26 middle schools and 178 junior basic and lower primary schools. NEFA boys were reading in several universities. In the field of health, up to 1951, the only medical coverage that the NEFA Administration provided was for the benefit of the Government staff and the Assam Rifles personnel. From the figure of one doctor for a population of 43,000 and one hospital bed for a population of 20,000 in 1947, by 1962 the health measures had improved so much that there was a doctor available for a population of 2,800 and a bed for 370 people, a much higher proportion than even in States like UP or Madhya Pradesh. There were 91 health units, each with a medical officer covering about 25 villages of the locality. Several good hospitals had been set up at Pasi Ghat, Along, Ziro, etc. Much attention had been paid to improving the standard of agriculture and animal husbandry, promoting community development and cooperation, extraction of forest wealth and replanting of new forests and improving cottage industries and arranging for their sale. A good deal of social welfare work had also been done.

In Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, also, the administration was extended to the frontier regions. In Uttar Pradesh, in place of three hill districts existing before 1950, six were created. Of these, three were new hill districts on the border —Pithoragarh, Chamoli and Uttar Kashi. Sub-divisions were also pushed further north and police stations opened. In Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, new districts were opened in Chini and Lahaul, where there used to be only a Tehsildar earlier in Chini and none in Lahaul. In Ladakh, also, police posts and administrative centres were opened even in places like Phobrang, Zanskar, Thoise, etc. Good development was made in other directions also, i.e. in the fields of health, education, agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, cooperation and social welfare.

Communications proved to be the most difficult all over the frontier, but more particularly in NEFA and in Ladakh. In NEFA, the road builders had to contend against 200" of rainfall in the year with unstable hillsides and soft soil; and in Ladakh

the problem was to get over the Zojila Pass and then reach Kargil via Dras where during the winter months the snowfall was even up to a depth of 15 to 20 feet. Road-building in Ladakh itself was comparatively easier and by 1962 the main road link from Leh to Chushul, Koyul, Demchok, etc. had been laid, but the road to the northern sector towards the Karakoram Pass had till then defied all efforts. Even the Zojila has since succumbed to pressure and is negotiable now for nearly 8 months in the year. It is only when the new road from Manali via Rohtang and Bara Lacha La becomes effective that through and safe communication with Ladakh from India will be available.

To start with, road construction all over the frontier was entrusted to the State organisations, but by 1957-58 it was found that the progress was not good enough. Hence the Border Roads Organisation came into existence; and, though it has proved to be a costly organisation, it has succeeded in providing roads even up to Mana in Uttar Pradesh, Kaurik in Himachal Pradesh and to all the district headquarters and even many sub-divisional headquarters in NEFA.

First-class airfields were constructed in Jammu, Srinagar and Ladakh and in practically all the district headquarters in NEFA. Smaller landing strips were constructed at several places in the interior of NEFA and helicopters could land even at the most isolated places. Telegraph lines have been taken to all the Base Superintendents' Headquarters and the Assam Rifles provide a good alternative line of communication by wireless.

Armed police and Assam Rifles were also expanded considerably, the Assam Rifles' strength rising from two battalions ear-marked for NEFA in 1947 to five battalions added by another six State Police or CRP battalions. Similarly in UP, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh, eight to ten police battalions were raised for frontier checkposts and patrolling in the frontier areas to relieve the troops.

The army strength rose from two hundred and eighty thousand personnel in three divisions and some unattached brigades and regiments to five hundred and fifty thousand personnel organised into eight Infantry Divisions, one Armoured Division, an

Independent Armoured Brigade and a Paratroop Brigade besides a large number of ancillary personnel. The Air Force also showed both a qualitative and a quantitative increase and from eight squadrons of fighters and transport planes of the propeller-driven type the number went up to twenty squadrons of jet fighters and fighter-bombers and six squadrons of transport planes, which were generally turbo-prop.* The defence expenditure also increased from 168 crores in 1950-51 to over 400 crores in 1961-62.** Of course, the expansion of the Army and the Air Force and consequently the increase in defence expenditure has gone up tremendously since the Chinese invasion of 1962, and the 1967-68 defence budget stood at well over 900 crores.

It is true that in 1962 the Chinese could muster in Tibet three times the troops which India could mass at the northern frontiers and the former were better conditioned and better trained and generally better armed also. Their road communication on the Tibet side of the frontier was much superior to India's. In fact, our road-making effort had not yet made itself felt within the last fifty or sixty miles of the frontier till then. I have explained the almost insuperable difficulties which the Indian road engineers had to face in building roads in our frontier regions where the road had to ascend all the time till it reached the pass in the face of the heavy monsoon rains of NEFA and the very heavy snowfall in the approaches to Ladakh and Lahaul and Spiti. As against our difficulties, the Chinese had a far easier time in laying roads in Tibet right up to the frontier. Moreover, in 1947 India started with an army of less than 3,00,000, which was badly disorganised during the partition. Mao's Communist China in 1949 had a force of 2½ million battle-trained troops, armed with large masses of American weapons, which had been supplied to Chiang Kai-shek, and also those which had been captured from the Japanese. The Russians were firm allies and gave the Chinese enormous assistance in arms, vehicles and aircraft and in gasolene and lubricants, and even helped in developing their nuclear capacity. Moreover, India was working out her destiny democratically

* Kavic, *India's Quest for Security*.

** Khera, *India's Defence Problem*.

and had to carry the people of NEFA and all the border regions along with the administration. China, on the other hand, rode rough-shod over the Tibetans, forced even monks and old men to fill the ranks of slave labour, cornered all the produce and built up its war machine in a climate of naked terror and ruthless oppression.

10 Panchsheel

THE QUARTERING OF A large Chinese garrison in Lhasa created serious tensions and strains. The Chinese occupied all the open spaces round the city and requisitioned a large number of big houses causing much inconvenience to the people of the town. No people take kindly to the quartering of foreign troops and there was little love lost between the Tibetans and the Chinese. Moreover, the people were not only deprived of their favourite picnic spots, which were now simmering with Chinese troops, but many families lost their homes and had to take shelter in very modest quarters in the bazar. But all this was not so bad as the requisitioning by the Chinese of thousands of tons of wheat and other foodgrains to feed their occupation troops. Communications from China to Lhasa were not yet fit for the transport of all supplies required for the troops and so they had to live off the land. Tibet never had much surplus food and the local people could just manage with whatever they produced. Hence this sudden influx of large numbers of Chinese troops into Lhasa, which almost doubled its population, sent prices rocketting and this caused much distress to the people.

The Dalai Lama's Prime Minister, Lukhangwa, tried his best to persuade the Chinese to remove the troops from the vicinity of Lhasa and to disperse them in the country or send them to the frontiers. But this the Chinese would not do. They kept the troops all round Lhasa on the plea that they were there to protect the Tibetan people. The rejoinder by the Tibetan Ministers, that the only people from whom the Tibetans required protection were the Chinese themselves, brought no reply. This callousness of the Chinese towards the sufferings of the people naturally caused serious resentment amongst the latter. There were public demonstrations and people started composing and openly sing-

ing songs disparaging the invaders. The Chinese demanded that such demonstrations should be banned and, though this was done, the people retaliated by issuing posters accusing the Chinese of starving the Tibetans. A large public meeting was held and a memorandum was drawn up asking the Chinese to withdraw from Tibet leaving only a few officials there. The Chinese in their turn ignored this demand and accused the Tibetan Ministers of complicity. The young Dalai Lama had to do a good deal of tight-rope walking to soothe Chinese feelings and to keep his people's opposition in check. But the relationship between the Tibetan Cabinet and the Chinese Generals went from bad to worse and the breaking point came when the Chinese wanted to absorb the Tibetan troops in the Chinese Army according to the terms of the Sino-Tibetan Agreement. This was stoutly opposed by the Tibetan Ministers and the Chinese Generals then demanded that the two Prime Ministers—Lukhangwa and Losang Tashi—should be dismissed. Rather than precipitate a crisis on this issue, the Dalai Lama, on the recommendation of his Cabinet, accepted the resignation of these two trusted officials. This step was strongly resented by the Tibetans but it kept the Chinese attitude conciliatory for some time.

Then the Chinese invited a delegation of Tibetan officials, monks and merchants to visit China and see for themselves the progress that China was making under the new regime and the freedom which the people of China enjoyed to practise their religion. Accordingly a delegation visited China in 1953 and was taken on a conducted tour of various places. When the delegation returned, it submitted a report which was, of course, prepared by the Chinese.

Subsequently, in the beginning of 1954, the Dalai Lama himself was invited to visit China. This was strongly opposed by the people of Tibet, because they had memories of two previous Dalai Lamas having been lured to Peking and kept under detention for several years. But the Dalai Lama decided to make the journey, because he felt that personal talks with the Chinese leaders might make things easier in Tibet and he might also be able to persuade the Chinese to reduce their garrison in Lhasa

which was causing a great deal of economic distress to the people. So he left for Peking in September, 1954, and was joined at Sian by the Panchen Lama, who had also been invited. In his book, *My Land and My People*, the Dalai Lama has given a detailed account of the various places he visited and the talks which he had with the Chinese leaders. He stayed in China for over six months and was received with a good deal of outward show of cordiality by Chu Teh, Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung, but they left no room for doubt as to who was the boss. He and the Panchen Lama were taken to various places in China, and both attended the sessions of the Chinese National Assembly, the proceedings of which the Dalai Lama could not follow as they were in Chinese. He, however, understood enough to realise that the ordinary members had no right to speak but only to applaud, and found that the speeches of the leaders were remarkable for their length and a four-hour speech was quite a common feature. In order to win over the Dalai Lama, Mao Tse-tung told him that the Chinese Generals Chang Ching-wu and Fang Min had been sent to Tibet to help him and the people of Tibet and not to exercise any kind of authority over the Tibetan Government or the people and enquired if the Chinese representatives had done anything against his wishes. Expressing his pleasure with the Dalai Lama's attitude and behaviour, Mao said that though at one stage the Central Government had decided to set up a Committee of political and military members to govern Tibet directly under the Chinese Govrnment, he now thought that this would not be necessary and had decided instead to set up a Preparatory Committee of the Autonomous Region of Tibet.

Before the Dalai Lama left China, the details of the proposed Preparatory Committee of the Autonomous Region were announced. The Committee was to consist of fifty-one members, of whom all except five would be Tibetans. The Dalai Lama was to be the Chairman, the Panchen Lama and a Chinese official were to be Vice-Chairmen and Ngapo Shapé the Secretary-General. The Committee's task would be to prepare Tibet for regional autonomy by setting up special committees for economic and religious affairs. Outwardly the Committee seemed to be alright, but its

constitution was so contrived that the Dalai Lama was reduced to the position of practically a nonentity from his previous position of being the secular head of the entire Tibet. Only fifteen members, including the Dalai Lama, were to represent the Tibetan Local Government, which was the real Tibetan Government. Eleven members were to be chosen from amongst the leading monasteries, religious sects, public bodies and prominent people. They were to be chosen by the Chinese and not by the Dalai Lama. Ten each were to represent the two separate bodies created by the Chinese, i.e. the Chamdo Liberation Committee for the area which they had first invaded and kept under their control, and the Panchen Lama's Committee which they had created in the west-central area of Tibet, thereby trying to give the Panchen Lama also a share in the secular authority. The remaining five members were to consist of Chinese officials in Lhasa. All selections to the Committee were to be subject to the approval of the Chinese Government. In the Sino-Tibetan Agreement it had been laid down that the existing political system of Tibet and the status of the Dalai Lama would not be altered, but by giving separate memberships to each of the two newly created regions, politically he was reduced to the position of one of the three heads. Also by this method it was sought to disintegrate Tibet—each part owing its allegiance more or less directly to the Chinese Government. Further, the very fact that the members would be chosen subject to the consent of the Chinese Government meant that the Dalai Lama would have little authority over them. Even his unchallenged authority over the monasteries was disregarded by giving them separate representation. Therefore, by the very creation of this Preparatory Committee, the Chinese had torn the Sino-Tibetan Agreement to pieces. But the Dalai Lama had no alternative but to accept this position; and he still hoped that, with a large majority of Tibetans in the Committee, it might be possible to lay down policies which would be beneficial to his country. In the meantime, some important developments had taken place in Sino-Indian relations.

Even though rebuffed by the Chinese in 1950 over their armed aggression in Tibet, India went on supporting China's claim

against that of Taiwan in the United Nations. The Chinese responded by ignoring the Government of India and inviting, in 1951, an unofficial delegation to visit China during the May Day celebrations. This was led by Pandit Sunder Lal, who later became the President of the Indo-China Friendship Society and maintained his pro-China posture even after China's aggression against India. The Government of India did not stop the delegation but mildly protested that the invitations should have been routed through the External Affairs Ministry. In reply the Chinese said that they had no objection to receiving an official delegation. So in May, 1952, the Government of India sent a goodwill mission led by Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit. This delegation was also received in a friendly way by the Chinese, who thereafter sent an official Chinese cultural delegation to India.

Panikkar had come to India on leave during the winter of 1951-52 and had consultations in the External Affairs Ministry about the attitude to be adopted regarding Tibet. The Chinese had till then not moved their troops beyond Chamdo though the Sino-Tibetan Agreement allowed them to do so, nor had the Chinese representative as yet arrived in Lhasa. Panikkar hoped that the Chinese would not move a considerable armed force into Tibet and this was expressed in a meeting called by the Ministry of External Affairs which I also attended as the representative of the Home Ministry. He further said that extra-territorial rights had no place in the relationship between two independent countries in modern times and India would put herself entirely in the wrong by insisting on the continuance of the rights which the British had forcibly extorted from Tibet. In any case China would not agree to their continuance and there was no way by which India could enforce them except by force of arms which India was not in a position to employ. So the best policy would be to give up gracefully all that was untenable and insist on economic and cultural rights which were of a more fundamental nature and were not necessarily based on treaties. Panikkar's views were shared by the Government of India.

On his return to Peking in February, 1952, Panikkar in his talks with the Chinese Foreign Minister expressed the hope that a

settlement satisfactory to both India and China in Tibet would be found. The Chinese promptly replied by saying that they saw no difficulty in safeguarding India's economic and cultural interests in Tibet. The Chinese then took time to make a detailed examination of the position. In his last meeting with Chou En-lai, prior to his final departure from Peking, Panikkar was told by the Chinese Premier that he hoped that India did not plan to claim special rights arising from unequal treaties and would be prepared to negotiate anew a permanent relationship with China to safeguard her legitimate interests. Chou En-lai also assured him that China did not want to terminate immediately the existence of such institutions as the posts and telegraphs and the trade marts which had been in existence for some time. He suggested that the first step to take would be to put the Indian Mission in Lhasa on a proper basis following the principle of reciprocity and then other questions like the withdrawal of the escorts and handing over of the posts and telegraphs could be taken up piecemeal later on.

Panikkar left China in June, 1952. He felt gratified that his efforts to bring about peace in Korea were about to bear fruit. He was also satisfied with his achievements in Tibet. This is what he records: "The Tibetan issue was simpler. Chou En-lai recognised the legitimacy of our trade and cultural interests in that area and suggested that the political agency in Lhasa, an office of dubious legality, should be regularised by its transformation into an Indian Consulate in exchange for a similar Chinese office in Bombay. This I had been authorised to accept. So far as our other posts and institutions were concerned, some of them like the telegraph lines, military escort at Yatung, were to be abolished quietly in time, and the trade agents and other subordinate agencies brought within the framework of our normal consulate relations. These were to be taken up when the circumstances became ripe. The main issue of our representation at Lhasa was thus satisfactorily settled and I was happy to feel that there was no outstanding issue between us and the Chinese at the time of my departure."* But he was too optimistic and he had

*K.M. Panikkar, *In Two Chinas.*

forgotten the most important issue, the frontier. He also had forgotten the summary way in which the Chinese had disposed of the Indian Consulate in Kashgar and had refused to talk about it.

After Panikkar's departure, the *Chargé-d'Affaires*, T.N. Kaul, took up the matter and informed the Chinese Government that the Indian Government attached much importance to the Trade Agencies and also to the trade marts and pilgrim traffic and hoped that these would continue till the matter could be discussed. But in the month of July, 1952, Chou En-lai issued a clarification of his talks with Panikkar. In this he bluntly said that the privileges which were being enjoyed by the Government of India as a result of unequal treaties forced by the British did not any longer exist. Therefore, the relationship between the new China and the new Government of India in the Tibet region should be built afresh through negotiations. In this note he also suggested the immediate solution of the question of the Mission at Lhasa. Therefore, it was clear that the Chinese had already shifted their position from the one they had taken during their last talks with Ambassador Panikkar and were no longer inclined to recognise that India had any rights in Tibet and were manoeuvring India into negotiating the whole issue afresh. The Government of India on their part agreed to the modification of some of the practices which had grown up in the past and to remove those which might be considered as affecting China's dignity. The outstanding questions between India and China were listed as the Indian Mission at Lhasa, Trade Agencies at Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok, trade marts and the right to carry on trade at other places, post and telegraph offices, rest houses, military escorts and pilgrim traffic. The Chinese agreed to the conversion of the Indian Mission at Lhasa into a Consulate in exchange for a Chinese Consulate in Bombay but did not take up the other questions for settlement. They were still bogged down in Korea and required India's assistance to pull them out of the imbroglio and were not yet firmly established in Tibet. And so the matter remained hanging fire for nearly one year.

When peace was ultimately declared in Korea in 1953 and the Chinese had moved sufficient troops into Tibet, quick develop-

ments took place. The Chinese objected to the despatch of fresh Indian troops to replace the guards at Gyantse and Yatung, and seized the wireless set of the Indian Trade Agent at Gartok and prevented him from proceeding to the trade marts at Rudok and Taklakot. The Chinese also would not allow the Political Officer, Sikkim, to visit Lhasa except on a proper visa. The Prime Minister then sent a message to Chou En-lai in August, 1952, expressing surprise and regret at these happenings. He further mentioned that the Government of India were anxious for a final settlement of all pending matters and suggested that the time had come for these to be settled to mutual advantage. Chou En-lai, however, maintained as correct the action taken against the Indian Trade Agent at Gartok, the denial of passage to Indian troops to relieve the escorts and also the restrictions imposed on the free movement of the Political Officer of Sikkim in Tibet. He stressed that the relations between the Governments of China and India in this area had to be built up anew through fresh negotiations, and he suggested Peking for talks which were to start in the month of December 1953. Thus quite abruptly China had terminated all the privileges which India had enjoyed in Tibet for nearly half a century. Communist China had followed the usual tactics of staging incidents first and creating a situation disadvantageous to the adversary which she could not remedy unilaterally and thus forcing the latter to come to the negotiating table on China's conditions.

In agreeing to the meeting, Prime Minister Nehru expressed the hope that all pending matters between the two Governments would be solved to the mutual satisfaction of the two countries. The delegation was led by N. Raghavan, who had succeeded Panikkar as the Ambassador, with T.N. Kaul as Member and Gopalachari as Advisor. Before its departure for Peking, the delegation was fully briefed at Delhi. It was decided that the question of the frontier would not be allowed to be raised, as in India's view this was well settled by custom, tradition and usage. If the Chinese raised it, the Indian side would refuse to discuss it. If the Chinese insisted, then the matter should be held up for a reference to Delhi. In some of the discussions which the IB

representative also attended, he expressed the view that any negotiation with China should relate to the frontier also as the Chinese had made no announcement renouncing their claim over large parts of northern India which Chinese maps showed as falling within China. But it was decided to let sleeping dogs lie and not raise the issue from our side.

The Conference opened at Peking on December 31, 1953. At the very outset Chou En-lai enquired of the Indian delegation whether the latter accepted the five principles of coexistence (which later came to be known as *Panchsheel*). The Indian delegation replied that these principles had already been enunciated by Prime Minister Nehru and were acceptable, and hoped that "all pending questions" between China and India in the Tibet region would be discussed and settled at the table. Chou En-lai, however, replied that big countries like India and China with long frontiers were bound to have many questions at issue and the conference should confine itself to only those questions which were "ripe for settlement". The Indian delegation again repeated that all pending questions had been communicated to the Chinese Government and hoped that these would be settled amicably. Therefore, the conference started with the two sides speaking in two voices, the Indians insisting that all "pending questions" should be discussed and settled and the Chinese holding the view that only "such questions as were ripe for discussion" should be taken up leaving the rest for future settlement. In India's view the border question did not exist but the Chinese kept this issue open to be taken up when a suitable occasion would arise.

These negotiations continued for four months, and ultimately the Sino-Indian Agreement was signed on April 29, 1954. The five principles or the *Panchsheel* defined in this agreement were (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) mutual non-aggression, (3) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefit, and (5) peaceful coexistence. There was nothing new in these principles which should normally guide the relations between two independent countries not at war with each other.

However, they were hailed at that time as heralding a new era in international relationship.

The first article of the agreement allowed the establishment of Trade Agencies by India in Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok and by China in New Delhi, Calcutta and Kalimpong. The Indian Agencies had existed since 1912 and so this was no new concession to India. But the Chinese got the right to open Trade Agencies in New Delhi, Calcutta and Kalimpong, which they did not have till then.

The second article fixed the trade marts in the respective countries. In Central Tibet they were to be at Yatung, Gyantse and Phari and in India at Kalimpong, Siliguri and Calcutta. Those in Tibet had already existed for long but conceding trade marts to the Chinese in Kalimpong, Siliguri and Calcutta was again a new concession to them. The Government of China also agreed to specify ten places in western Tibet as trade marts and reserved the right to obtain from India corresponding facilities in western India as and when the need arose. These trade marts in western Tibet already existed and the Chinese got the right to open marts in western India, which was again a new concession. However, these marts in western India were not opened.

Article 3 allowed pilgrims from India to go to Mount Kailash, Mansarovar and Lhasa and from Tibet to Benaras, Sarnath, Gaya and Sanchi, and certain passes were fixed for the pilgrim traffic. Here again this was no new concession. Pilgrims from each country had been visiting the other for several centuries.

Article 5 exempted people of the border, who were engaged in customary trade, from the necessity of obtaining passports and visas and only permits were prescribed for such visits. This at least allowed trade and other intercourse between the Tibetans and the Indians to continue for the time being and this was a gain.

A most important point in this agreement was in the very preamble, which mentioned Tibet as the Tibet Region of China and not as the Autonomous Region of Tibet, thus officially denying the recognition of Tibet as a separate autonomous unit.

In the notes exchanged, India agreed to withdraw the Indian military escorts stationed at Yatung and Gyantse and to hand

over to China all the postal, telegraph and public telephone services and also the twelve rest houses in Tibet. This was a unilateral renunciation of India's rights. The other agreements, like India retaining the Trade Agency building in Gyantse and Yatung in return for China acquiring similar buildings at Calcutta and Kalimpong, the Trade Agents of both countries being able to meet their nationals, each country protecting the person and property of the traders and pilgrims of the other, were on a reciprocal basis.

On two issues the real significance of the Chinese attitude was probably not fully understood at the time. The first was that the Chinese delegate would not discuss the question of trade marts for Ladakhi traders in Western Tibet on the ground that this related to Kashmir which was under dispute between India and Pakistan. In other words, even as early as 1954, China had indicated that she was maintaining a neutral attitude as between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. The second point was the refusal of the Chinese to recognise the customary trade mart in Rudok (western Tibet) without ascribing any particular reason. This was no doubt because the Chinese were building the road from Rudok to Sinkiang via Aksai Chin.

Subsequently in the month of October, 1954, a Trade Agreement was signed between the two countries at Delhi according to which China got two important concessions without conceding anything corresponding to India. The first was the accord of reasonable facilities for entry into the port of Calcutta and subsequent movement to the Tibet region of such commercial goods as could not be obtained in India, and the second was the establishment of branches of the People's Bank of China in India. The first concession allowed the Chinese to transport to Tibet a large volume of goods required for the maintenance of their troops, though these did not fall strictly within the nomenclature of military supplies. And by opening the Bank in Calcutta the Chinese Government not only forced the Chinese residents to deal with only the China Bank but also kept many of their transactions secret.

These developments disturbed us in the Intelligence Bureau.

We felt that both the Agreements had gone entirely in favour of China and against the interests of India. By recognising Tibet as a province of China, India had given up her stand of Tibet being an Autonomous Region, enjoying autonomy which during the previous forty years had developed almost into independence, giving Tibet the right to make treaties with the neighbouring countries. The only area in which China and India came in direct contact with each other was Tibet, and this recognition of Tibet as a part of China and of the five principles of *Panchsheel* practically prevented even the expression of sympathy by India for the Tibetan people and restricted all her actions in support of Tibet. Anything that India might like to do to ease the sufferings of the Tibetan people would be considered as interfering in the internal affairs of China. Legally and internationally it even shut India out from raising the question of Tibetan autonomy in the United Nations. As against this concession of tremendous political significance, China conceded nothing to India. Article 2 of the Agreement, which allowed trade with both central and western Tibet, worked satisfactorily for some years so far as Central Tibet was concerned but was almost dead from the beginning in Western Tibet, and the Chinese put every obstacle in the way of the Indian Trade Agent taking up his post in Gartok. After a short time, the Chinese insisted that all profits made by the Indian traders by transactions in the Tibetan marts must be retained in Tibet itself. So in this way, indirectly, even the trade marts in Central Tibet were effectively closed and the Indian merchants had to sell their goods only in the trade marts in India. Moreover, the main commodity from Tibet, for which there was great demand in India, was Tibetan wool, and the Chinese diverted the entire wool trade to China. So there was little left for exchange. The Trade Agreement, according to which the Chinese could make use of the port of Calcutta for the transport of goods from China to Tibet, also worked only in China's favour, because India got no such port facility in exchange, nor could it be of any use to her. Past history had shown that Chinese troops in Tibet could be maintained only with the help of supplies carried from India and, as till 1957-58 the Chinese had not been able

to build up a reliable road system linking Sining and Chamdo with Lhasa, they had to depend a great deal on supplies from India and Nepal to maintain their troops in Tibet which were being used for suppressing the people of Tibet and also for aggressive postures on the Indian frontier. Again, in the working of the Trade Agencies where they existed, whereas India gave all facilities and the Chinese Trade Agencies and the Consulates could contact not only any Chinese and Tibetan but also any Indian as in any free country, the Indian Trade Agencies and the Consulate were gradually isolated and prevented from making contacts with any Tibetans and the Consulate at Lhasa even found it difficult to contact a fair number of Kashmiri Muslims who had been residing in Lhasa for a long time. Such liberty of functioning and movements, which the Chinese officers at their Trade Agencies and Consulates in India enjoyed, were misused by them in order to make contacts with groups who were hostile to the Government of India, and the China Bank, as subsequent investigations proved, had also become a source for passing on funds to them.

India, therefore, had given up all her extra-territorial rights in Tibet acquired by the British first in 1904 and then expanded in 1914. This was in keeping with the Prime Minister's statement in Parliament in 1950 that he did not want such rights as had been extorted from a weak Tibet by the powerful British rulers in the earlier part of the century. But the renunciation of these rights was not done in favour of a weak and friendly Tibet, but in favour of a strong and belligerent China, which had committed aggression against Tibet and was holding that country in a tight grip. Moreover, the question of these rights could not be considered in isolation, as the question of the Indo-Tibetan border was also linked with these earlier agreements entered into by the then Government of India with the Government of Tibet. As mentioned earlier, one view expressed during the briefing of our delegation was that the question of India's northern frontier should also be settled during the negotiations. But the general view was that we should not allow China to take this opportunity to rake up the whole issue. In any case, China was not going to recognise

the McMahon line which we considered to be our northern frontier and so there could not be any negotiations on that score. This view was probably correct. The Chinese attitude during the negotiations showed that unlike the Indian side which considered the Agreement to be complete leaving no issues pending, the Chinese took this as applying to only those issues which were ripe for discussion and left no doubt that they considered that there were other issues which would be taken up when an opportunity favourable to China arose. The border no doubt fell in this category. We also protested against the Trade Agreement Allowing China to purchase and transport goods from and through India. But our protest was of no avail, because the Defence authorities held that such supplies could not be of any security threat to India and the External Affairs Ministry took the view that, for a land-locked area like Tibet, transport facilities across a neighbouring country like India had to be given according to international usage. Moreover, the volume of trade could not be much because of the difficult nature of communications between India and Tibet. Also India was in a position at any moment to stop this traffic. About the establishment of a branch of the Bank of China in Calcutta, we were told that this was one of the normal facilities given to any country having diplomatic relations and the fact that we did not ask for our own Bank in China made no difference. Both these views were, no doubt, correct, but the gains accruing from the Agreement went only to China.

The Sino-Indian Treaty of 1954 caused a terrible shock to the Tibetans. They had already been upset by the unilateral Indian acceptance of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet which, according to them, allowed China to commit aggression against that country. The Tibetans argued that, simultaneously with recognising China, if India had also insisted on Tibetan autonomy and had increased her troops in Tibet, the Chinese would not have dared invade that country. The Tibetans also criticised India for having meekly acceded to the signing of the 17-point Sino-Tibetan Agreement which had been forced down Tibet's throat as this was the first time that a treaty had been signed between these two countries in the twentieth century without India being a party to it. Whilst the Chinese

had announced that they had come to liberate Tibet from the imperialists, in Tibet they were propagating that they had come to throw out the Indians who had stationed troops there and enjoyed extra-territorial rights. In actuality, they were treating the Tibetans as serfs and were doing everything possible to lower the respect and authority of the Dalai Lama. Already China had destroyed even the little autonomy that had been promised by the Sino-Tibetan Agreement. The new Agreement between China and India completely ignored Tibet's autonomy and was against all international morals, for the fate of a small country had been decided by two big neighbours without any reference to it. The Tibetans pointed out that the Chinese had not recognised the Indian boundary and were sure to raise the issue sooner or later. According to the Tibetan interpretation of this Agreement, the Chinese had got everything that they wanted without conceding anything to the Indians. Whilst professing friendliness towards India, the Chinese were denigrating her in Tibet by propagating that China had forced India to renounce her rights in Tibet and India would soon be forced to hand over all the buildings, telegraph lines and post offices and withdraw her troops. Also, in return for some Agencies of doubtful value in Yatung and Gyantse, India had been forced to concede Agencies to China in such important places as Kalimpong and Calcutta. We, in due course, communicated these reactions to the Government. The Prime Minister told me that the Tibetans had adequate grounds for these criticisms but, placed as she was without sufficient military power, India could not have done any better. He hoped that, with the last vestiges of suspicion against India removed, China might adopt a reasonable attitude and Tibetan autonomy could yet be saved in substance and India's own interests safeguarded.

Of course, the question was not one of doing what we desired—but of what could have been done in the circumstances. Having no military power to stop the Chinese coming into Tibet, as far as our so-called rights were concerned, we could exercise them only so far as the Chinese allowed us to do so. We could not have resisted the Chinese evicting our military guards at Yatung and Gyantse and their taking over the rest-houses and the telegraph

lines. If they ordered us to close our Trade Agencies and the Consulate as they had earlier done at Kashgar, we would have to acquiesce. In the circumstances, we could no doubt have refused to allow the establishment of the Chinese Consulate in Bombay or the Trade Agencies and the Bank. It certainly would have relieved the Intelligence Bureau of a lot of its headache in subsequent years to contain the espionage and propaganda activities emanating from these offices. But the other immediate result would have been the presence of a hostile, powerful and unscrupulous China along the 2,000 miles of our northern border—able to create endless trouble in our frontier areas over which our administration had not till then been consolidated. In retaliation we might also have created trouble in Tibet but these would not have led to the solution of the border problem. Hence there was no other alternative in the circumstances than to try the friendly approach hoping that, if we could not save Tibet, at least we could save our own frontiers. After all national self-interest is the motivating force of a country's foreign policy. In circumstances similar to the Chinese aggression against Tibet, when the Russians sent their armour into Hungary to subdue the rebellious people, the NATO did nothing. Unpleasant and shocking though it was, placed in the position that India was at that time, there was very little else that she could do. So the Indian delegation cannot be blamed for any failure. They saved as much of India's rights as they possibly could have done in the circumstances.

The two Agreements brought the *Hindi-Chini-Bhai-Bhai* spirit to the forefront at this time. Chou En-lai made a quick visit to India immediately after the signing of the Sino-Indian Agreement. He was received with much cordiality and he made repeated professions of eternal friendship with India. Even the critics of the Government in Parliament and outside were confounded and joined in the general effusions of friendship and wanted to take a new look at China as a friendly neighbour. A return visit was paid by Prime Minister Nehru. When Mao Tse-tung received Pandit Nehru, the stage setting was such as to give the impression that the Indian leader was being ushered into the presence of an "august being". It was during this visit that Mao had boasted to

Pandit Nehru that he was not afraid of an atom bomb attack on China. Though two to three hundred million Chinese might be killed as a result, there would be enough left to fight and overcome the Americans. At this time Pandit Nehru talked to Chou En-lai about the circulation of Chinese maps which showed some parts of India within the Chinese boundary. But Chou En-lai assured him that these were old maps and the Chinese Government had had no time to take up their revision. Krishna Menon also later visited Peking and was able to secure the release of some American soldiers taken prisoners in Korea. India also accepted the Chairmanship of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Committee for the repatriation of the war prisoners held by the two sides in Korea. But in trying to play fair in this dispute over prisoners, India was accused of siding with the Americans by the Chinese.

The Bandung Conference was held in 1955 and Pandit Nehru chaperoned Chou En-lai and introduced him to the Afro-Asian delegates from various countries. Chou En-lai did not even know the names of many of these countries and had to look them up in an atlas to find their location. But even here the Chinese tried to dominate the show. Chou En-lai put forward China's example for emulation by all countries just freed from foreign rule. He struck up friendship with Pakistan, at whose insistence not the five principles of coexistence but seven were adopted. Pandit Nehru had great difficulty in drafting the Declaration of the Conference because the Chinese Prime Minister's interpretation of even English words was different. One of the planes carrying a delegation of some subordinate Chinese officials and Pressmen to Djakarta was sabotaged by a Formosan agent and it was in that connection that Chou En-lai accused the Head of Indian Intelligence of being a British agent, an allegation which he later had to withdraw, a rare Chinese admission of having made a mistake. A full account of this incident follows in the next Chapter.

The Dalai Lama was invited by the Maha Bodhi Society to India during the 2500th birth anniversary of Gautama Buddha. For several months the Chinese would not allow him permission to come and instead suggested that a representative should be sent; but ultimately, on direct representation being made to Peking,

at the last moment he was permitted to make the visit. Not trusting him alone, the Panchen Lama was also sent. Incidentally, Chou En-lai also visited India at this time probably to overawe the Dalai Lama by his presence and keep him under check. A full account of the Dalai Lama's visit and his activities here and the profound influence which the Indian scene exercised on him have all been vividly described by him in his book, *My Land and My People*. After he had been in India for about two months, his brother one day suddenly came to me late at night and informed me that the Dalai Lama had made up his mind not to return to Tibet, and that he would soon tell Prime Minister Nehru of this decision.

I met the Prime Minister the next morning and told him about this development. He said that it would be unfortunate if the Dalai Lama did not return, because he was the only figure round which the Tibetans could unite, and the entire Tibetan population would be demoralised and would fall irretrievably under Chinese domination if he was not there. India, of course, would give him shelter whenever it became necessary, but he should stay in Tibet as long as possible and suffer along with his people all the indignities which the Chinese might heap on them. He said that he would talk to Chou En-lai so that the rigours of the Chinese presence in Tibet were lessened. He asked me to convey this to the Dalai Lama's brother and said that he would give the same advice to the Dalai Lama if the latter approached him. The Dalai Lama's book shows that he actually made this proposal to the Prime Minister and the latter gave him the same reply and the Dalai Lama thereafter gave up the idea of staying back in India, and he ultimately returned to Tibet.

The Prime Minister kept his word and took up the Tibetan question with Chou En-lai, who conceded that the local officers might have committed excesses and said that he would talk to Mao Tse-tung and suggest not to accelerate the process of socialising Tibet. Pandit Nehru asked me to convey this information also to the Dalai Lama's brother, which I did. This talk by Pandit Nehru had some effect, and, for two years after this, the Chinese did go slow and it was even resolved in the Chinese Natio-

nal Assembly that no reforms would be introduced in Tibet for at least five years. China also made some token withdrawal of troops from Central Tibet, to reduce the economic hardships of the Tibetan people. One of the reasons of this was that she was finding it difficult to maintain her large garrison there.

During this visit of Chou En-lai, Prime Minister Nehru again took up the question of Chinese maps which showed large parts of Indian territory as also certain parts of Sikkim and Bhutan in China. The Prime Minister had recorded a note which he had quoted later in Parliament and it is best to quote the Prime Minister's words:* "Premier Chou En-lai referred to the McMahon line and again said that he had never heard of this before though of course the then Chinese Government had dealt with this matter and had not accepted that line. He had gone thoroughly into the matter in connection with the border dispute with Burma. Although he thought this line, established by British Imperialism, was not fair, nevertheless, because it was an accomplished fact and because of the friendly relations which existed between China and the countries concerned, namely, India and Burma, the Chinese Government were of the opinion that they should give recognition to the McMahon Line. They had, however, not consulted the Tibetan authorities about it yet. They proposed to do so". Chou had managed to create an impression on Pandit Nehru that at least so far as the eastern frontier was concerned he would accept the McMahon Line as the frontier. He had also given Pandit Nehru to understand that, so far as the Western and the Central Sectors were concerned, he would accept the traditional frontier, and he conceded that the disputes were over small bits and could be settled by talks and it should not in any way be a barrier to India-China friendship.

Throughout this period of 1952-58, on the surface, Sino-Indian friendship was maintained. India continued her support of China's admission to the United Nations year after year and opened no relationship with the Taiwan Government. But there were several cases of frontier violations by the Chinese. There were the notable instances in Bara Hoti and Nilang in UP, near

* *White Paper* published by the Government of India.

Kaza in Himachal Pradesh, near Chushul, Dungti and Aksai Chin in Ladakh and in several places in NEFA. When the Indian Government complained about these intrusions, the Chinese Government either claimed that these places were in Chinese territory or denied that there had been an intrusion. These exchanges were in friendly diplomatic language and the uneasy calm continued on the India-China frontier till 1958. But all this interval was utilised by China to build a network of roads, both arterial and to our frontiers, and consolidating her position even in the remote parts of Tibet. Chinese maps claiming large parts of the northern regions of India continued to be in circulation and were not withdrawn and protests brought the same reply that the Chinese Government had not had the time to revise the maps.

II The Kashmir Princess

THE AIR INDIA INTERNATIONAL Superconstellation plane, "The Kashmir Princess", which had been chartered by the Chinese Government for carrying some members of its delegation to attend the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung (Indonesia) in April, 1955, caught fire after an explosion five hours after it had taken off from Hong Kong on April 11, 1955. The Captain of the aircraft dived to make a landing in the sea, but, due to loss of power because of fire and explosion, the plane crashed in the sea with great impact and broke into parts. All the eleven passengers were killed and so were all the members of the crew excepting three. There was a current belief that the plane had originally been chartered to take the Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, to Djakarta, but he actually travelled via Kunming, Rangoon and Singapore and "The Kashmir Princess" carried only some junior Chinese officers and Press representatives for the conference.

The whole world was shocked by this outrage. It was suspected that someone had planted a time bomb in the plane before its take off from Hong Kong on the assumption that Chou En-lai would be travelling in it. The Indian Press clamoured for a proper investigation to find out who were responsible for it and bring them to book, and various surmises were made involving the KMT, the British and the USA. The plane had crashed in Indonesian waters and the Indonesian maritime authorities, helped by the British Navy, salvaged parts of the wreckage, and there was clear indication that a time device had been used to cause the explosion. Bits of the explosive and the time device were found inside the starboard under-carriage wheelbay of the aircraft. The experts, who examined the wreckage, also found that the damage was inconsistent with the failure of any aircraft part and hence it was clear that the time device was used for this sabotage.

As the offence had taken place in Hong Kong, the British authorities were carrying on the investigation and Sir Anthony Eden, the Prime Minister of England, had assured the Indian and the Chinese Prime Ministers that no stone would be left unturned to unravel this mystery and bring the guilty to book. The Chinese Government, however, insisted that Indian officers should also be associated with the enquiry, and the British Government had no objection to this procedure. The Chinese Government had posted their own Intelligence staff in Hong Kong to collect Intelligence on their own. Pandit Nehru was naturally very upset and before his departure for Bandung wanted that a senior Indian officer should be sent to Hong Kong to be associated with the enquiry. R.N. Kao, Assistant Director in charge of Security, was selected for this purpose.

Kao first went to Bombay on April 20 to interview two of the survivors amongst the crew—Dixit and Karnik. Later he went to Singapore to see the progress of the salvage operations, and arrived at Djakarta on the 23rd, where he met Pandit Nehru and also the Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, who invited him to come to Peking, where all the material obtained by the Chinese Government would be given to him. Kao arrived at Hong Kong on April 30, and got in touch with the Governor and the Commissioner of Police, Hong Kong, and collected detailed information about the progress of the enquiry. He arrived at Peking on May 7, and had several meetings with Chou En-lai and was later given a written note containing the information which the Chinese Government had collected. He returned to Hong Kong on the 18th afternoon accompanied by Hsiung Hsiang-hui, Deputy Director of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and two of his assistants. Thereafter Kao continued to keep liaison with the British authorities in Hong Kong on one side and the Chinese Intelligence Officer on the other and kept us at Headquarters in the picture about the progress of the investigation. From his reports we felt that the Hong Kong Police were doing their best to get at the culprits.

On a complaint by Chou En-lai to Prime Minister Nehru that the investigation was progressing very slowly, the Prime Minister

desired that I should myself go to Hong Kong and put more life into the investigation and see that it was completed quickly. He himself was not very sure that the British were putting into the investigation the energy and expedition which they normally displayed in important criminal cases. I realised that to make a thorough and speedy job of the investigation, much more pressure had to be brought to bear upon the Hong Kong authorities, and so I requested the Head of the British Intelligence in South-East Asia to meet me at Hong Kong in connection with this case.

I left Calcutta on May 1, and arrived at Hong Kong on June 1. The Chief British Intelligence Officer from S.E. Asia also arrived. For the next two days I was busy the whole day and the greater part of the night going through the police records, discussing with the Commissioner of Police and the Hong Kong Special Branch, exchanging ideas with British Intelligence Officers, meeting the Governor, Sir Alexander Grantham, interviewing Hsiung in his fortress in one corner of Hong Kong and discussing the case with Kao. I found that on the clues provided by the Chinese, the Hong Kong Special Branch had collected a large amount of information about the KMT Intelligence Service operating in Hong Kong and also a good deal of evidence regarding the complicity of a few persons in the sabotage of "The Kashmir Princess". After discussions with the British authorities, I recommended that the Hong Kong Police should separate the two investigations: (1) ramifications of the KMT Intelligence Service in Hong Kong, and (2) investigation into the sabotage of "The Kashmir Princess". The second investigation was narrower in scope and related to a specific case and it was clear that it was getting lost in the much wider investigation in the ramifications of the KMT intelligence activities. The KMT apparently operated on a wide scale in Hong Kong and through that place in mainland China. Moreover, it was impossible for the ordinary police to investigate thoroughly the activities of any foreign intelligence service, and so I suggested that British counter-espionage experts should come from England to take up the first enquiry.

The story of the sabotage, as unravelled, was that a senior KMT Intelligence Officer, who was known as Wu, had, about the

third week of March, enquired at a particular shop, which was found to be one of the contact places of the KMT Intelligence in Hong Kong, whether any one working there had any clansman employed at the Kaitak Airport of Hong Kong. Ultimately a person called Chou Chu was found. He was an employee of the Hong Kong Aircraft Engineering Company which was responsible for servicing all planes landing at the Kaitak Airport. When the proposition to plant a bomb in the plane was first made to him, he demurred as it was a dangerous job. Later he agreed when he was assured that he would be given a huge remuneration. He was trained in the placing of a time-bomb and priming it by a subordinate of Wu. He was then issued with a small time bomb. On April 11, "The Kashmir Princess" was due to depart from Hong Kong for Djakarta. Chou Chu was amongst the members of the engineering staff who serviced the aircraft. He, with the help of another man called Wong, placed the time bomb in a cavity in one of the wings of the aircraft close to a fuel tank. Some days later, under the influence of drink, Chou Chu confessed to his father and one of his friends of having committed this sabotage in the way mentioned above. On May 18, Chou Chu escaped from Hong Kong in an American Civil Air Transport plane as a stowaway and reached Taipei in Formosa. Whilst the Hong Kong authorities were pressing the Civil Air Transport to fly Chou Chu back to Hong Kong, the KMT authorities got hold of him, and that was the end of it. The British had no extradition treaty with Formosa and so could not demand Chou Chu's extradition. India had no diplomatic relations with Formosa either. Wu could not be traced and he also must have escaped to Formosa long before his name cropped up in the investigation. The Hong Kong Police had, however, arrested a large number of persons in connection with the activities of the KMT Intelligence.

During his discussions with me, Hsiung insisted that all the people who had had any contact with Chou Chu should be arrested and tried for conspiracy in the sabotage. Their number would be very large and even keepers of the hotels in which Chou Chu had dined or taken meal even once came under this

category. I told Hsiung that neither under the British nor under the Indian laws this was possible. Chou Chu must have come in contact with many people living their daily normal lives, eaten at lots of restaurants, gone to many cinemas, and all these people and keepers of all these hotels, restaurants and cinemas could not be guilty of the conspiracy. The evidence in the case was quite clear and a total of about five or six persons were involved, of whom the two principal accused—Wu and Chou Chu—had escaped to Formosa. The arrests in connection with the activities of the KMT Intelligence Service in Hong Kong was a different matter and the British had arrested or detained a large number of persons of this Intelligence group and would take suitable action against them in due course. As there was no specific case against them, the utmost that could be done against those who were not Hong Kong citizens was to deport them to Formosa or to the country of their origin. Hsiung was not at all satisfied and he insisted that all these people should be arrested immediately and handed over to the Chinese authorities.

Hsiung never came out of his fortress to our knowledge, and Kao and I had to go every day to meet him. Even though I invited him to come and meet the Commissioner of Police and have a face-to-face talk, this he was not willing to do. I even suggested that if he did not want to meet the British Officers formally, he might come to my hotel to have a meal with me and I would invite the British Intelligence Officer and Hsiung could informally talk to him, but this also he would not do. He apparently wanted Indian pressure on the British authorities to deliver to his country those KMT nationals whom the British had arrested without any specific charges.

I had two meetings with the Governor, Sir Alexander Grantham, and he said that he had received instructions from the British Prime Minister to go all out to bring the culprits to book and assured me that steps would be taken, and we were given the same assurance by the Commissioner of Police. The British Intelligence Officer had also wired to his Head Office in London to send counter-intelligence experts to take up the investigation of the intelligence network. The case of sabotage

of "The Kashmir Princess" had by that time been successfully worked out, but the two principal accused had slipped away to Formosa and there was no chance of their repatriation to Hong Kong and the only way any of them could be put under trial was his chance arrest in case he visited Hong Kong again. The chances of this happening were remote.

There was nothing more for me to do at Hong Kong. The Prime Minister was leaving Bombay on June 5 on a long tour to several East European countries, including Soviet Russia, and then to London, and I felt that he would like to know the full details of the investigation before his departure. So leaving Kao behind to complete the residuary work, I left Hong Kong on June 4 by a Cathay-Pacific plane and reached Singapore that night. I caught the Air India Superconstellation plane at Singapore in the early hours of June 5 and arrived at Bombay via Madras at 2 p.m. that day. I phoned to the Raj Bhavan immediately to inform the Prime Minister of my arrival. I also requested him to come half an hour earlier to the airport so that I could give him the full details of the investigation. The Prime Minister did come and immediately took me to the VIP room and I gave him all the details. He was very happy at the success of the investigation, though of course the culprits had escaped. He was also happy to hear that the Hong Kong authorities had done their best in this case. He said that this information would be very useful for him in his talks in Moscow and other East European countries where "The Kashmir Princess" issue was bound to be raised. He congratulated me and Kao on the good work which had been done. He departed for Cairo at 3-30 p.m. As I had expected to return from Hong Kong via Calcutta, I had fixed some important work at Calcutta for my return trip. So, the next morning I went to Calcutta. There I got information that both the Foreign Secretary and the Home Minister wanted my early return. I had no idea why my urgent return to Delhi was necessary. I arrived at Delhi in the morning on June 7.

The Home Minister had earlier gone away to Nainital. Shortly after my arrival, I met S. Dutt, the Foreign Secretary. He showed me two long telegrams from our Ambassador in Peking, contain-

ing serious allegations which Chou En-lai had made against me personally for my alleged collusion with the British, for not acceding to the reasonable request for action made by the Chinese representative Hsiung and imputing that I was probably in British and American pay. He also ascribed my hasty return from Hong Kong without finishing the work due to pressure from the British. Dutt informed me that he had repeated these cables to the Prime Minister at Prague and he wanted to know what reply from me should now be sent to him. I told Dutt that I had finished my work in Hong Kong and every hour that I spent further there would have been a waste, though I could have easily extended my stay and done some sight-seeing, I left as soon as I felt that my work was completed to report to the Prime Minister, which I considered was very important, as "The Kashmir Princess" case might be raised during the Prime Minister's discussions in every country he visited, and so he should be given full facts before he left the shores of India; and I had succeeded in doing so and the Prime Minister was also extremely happy. I also told Dutt that only the Chinese could make such reckless allegations, quite oblivious of the fact that India had suffered a much bigger loss than China by this accident and would like to pursue this enquiry to the end whether China wanted it or not. Regarding my not acceding to the "reasonable" request for action made by the Chinese representative, I told Dutt that the Chinese representative wanted several hundred persons to be arrested and put under trial or alternatively to be handed over to the Chinese authorities, but this was hardly feasible under either the British or the Indian laws and, though I had explained this to the Chinese representative, he was not satisfied. I mentioned that I had asked the Chinese representative to come out of his lair, meet the British Officers and talk to them face to face, but he had refused to do so. He had even refused to come out and meet them informally at a meal. Anyone who did not toe the Chinese line hundred per cent would be accused by the Chinese of being in the pay of the imperialists. I certainly could not be expected to suggest illegal action to the British to satisfy Chinese whims. I strongly resented the remarks that Chou En-lai

had made against me and insisted that he must withdraw them as they were entirely baseless. If he thought that he could thereby pressurise me to toe the Chinese line, he was mistaken.

On the basis of my explanation, Dutt drafted a reply and telegraphed it to the Prime Minister in Prague for his prior approval. He also kept the Home Minister at Nainital informed. The Prime Minister's approval came within a few hours, and this was then sent on to Peking. In sending this reply, Dutt also added for the information of our Ambassador that the Prime Minister had full confidence in me and it was most unfortunate that this type of unfounded allegation should have been made against a senior and trusted officer.

Then came another telegram from our Embassy in Peking containing the Chinese Government's reiteration of the previous allegations and demanding that action should be taken against me, and that the Indian Government must insist that the British should hand over the suspects to the Chinese. All these were ludicrous demands and Dutt forwarded this telegram also to the Prime Minister, who at that time had moved on to Moscow, and then he prepared a draft reply with my assistance which he also telegraphed to the Prime Minister for his approval, keeping the Home Minister at Nainital informed at the same time. The Prime Minister approved of the draft and it was sent to Peking. The Prime Minister had added that a strong protest should be made to the Chinese Government for making such baseless allegations against me. Dutt did this in strong terms.

The great Chou En-lai then relented and withdrew his charges against me. It was a matter of great satisfaction to me particularly and to S. Dutt and our Ambassador in Peking, and also to the Prime Minister and the Home Minister. This was the only occasion in the long correspondence, which had gone on between the Chinese and the Indian Governments over various differences, small and serious, which had cropped up between the two governments during the last twenty years, on which the Chinese Government was forced to eat its words and make a withdrawal and the arrogant Prime Minister of China had to express regret for having made allegations against a mere Indian official. This happened

because Prime Minister Nehru had complete trust in both me and Kao and he knew that we must have done everything that was possible in the circumstances. He also knew us too well even to harbour the remotest suspicion of our collusion with a foreign country. In fact, the entire Intelligence Bureau had been built up in such a way that such a thing could never happen.

About the middle of June I had to go to London for a conference. The Prime Minister arrived there along with Shrimati Indira Gandhi on July 8, after his East European tour. I went to the airport to receive him. On seeing me Pandit Nehru asked me to drive with him to his hotel. Indira Gandhi was also in the car. On the way, he asked me why Chou En-lai had taken such an unreasonable attitude and whether I had given any cause of offence to the Chinese representative. I told the Prime Minister that, waiving all protocol considerations, I had gone to the fortress of the Chinese representative every day of my stay in Hong Kong to meet him and discuss with him and put him in possession of all the facts collected till then and the plan of action which had been made. He would never come out of his lair; he even refused to meet the British representatives. I had given him all the clues and I had asked him whether he had any suggestions regarding any particular lines in which the investigation should be directed, but he had no idea. The only difference of opinion between me and him was that he wanted the indiscriminate arrest of several hundred people and their being handed over to the Chinese Government, which, I said, was not possible either under the Indian or the British laws. The Prime Minister was happy at the discomfiture of the Chinese Prime Minister and Indira Gandhi also joined in the laughter and congratulated me for winning the duel against Chou En-lai. The Prime Minister said that the Chinese were strange people; they saw the shadow of imperialism in everything, and, unless one worked as their stooge to carry out whatever they wanted, they did not have the least compunction to dub one as an imperialist agent. He said that he had had much difficulty with the Chinese Premier even in the Bandung Conference. He enquired when Kao would return, and I told him that I wanted him to stay on till every effort had been

completed regarding the arrest of the accused persons. He approved of this.

Kao did not return till September 15. According to our instructions, he made a second visit to Peking. He had several meetings with Chou En-lai, who was very polite to him and did not refer to the very serious charge which he had levelled against me two months earlier. Throughout the interview, Chou En-lai tried to get an admission from Kao that the British were not investigating the case properly due to pressure from the Americans. Kao, however, held his ground and maintained that the British had done everything possible; but as the accused had already escaped to Formosa before his complicity became known, there was nothing that could be done, there being no means of getting him back from Formosa. Chou En-lai then wanted Kao to sign a joint report along with Hsiung, but, according to our instructions, Kao did not agree to do it. However, he went through the report which Hsiung had submitted to his Government and got a copy of it.

The accused never came back to Hong Kong and Wu, the brain behind this conspiracy, also could not be traced. The British closed the case in the month of December, as nothing more could be done. Thus ended "The Kashmir Princess" episode.

12 Nonalignment

IN HIS BOOK, *The Guilty Men of 1962*, Mankekar has given an able exposition of the problem inherent in the triangle of India, Tibet and China. Khera has also traversed the same ground, though in a more discursive way, in his book, *India's Defence Problem*. But Mankekar, in branding Pandit Nehru as one of the guilty men responsible for the happenings of 1962, has, in my opinion, gravely erred. Mankekar's handicap was that he did not have all the inside information about some of the earlier decisions and so he was working on incomplete data. He has marshalled his charges against Pandit Nehru as follows :

"What effective courses of action could India have taken to safeguard her frontiers against a hostile Chinese-dominated Tibet ?

"Firstly in the face of tell-tale evidence of China's evil intention towards India almost from the outset, that India should have recklessly dropped its guard and blindly reposed faith in the Chinese protestations of friendship and peace was a grave blunder. From that blunder flowed all the troubles that India had to face since 1959 at any rate.

"This smug, naive '*Bhai-Bhai*' mentality, that stemmed from wilful blindness, stood in the way of India utilising an eleven year long warning to prepare herself to meet the Chinese menace.

"It could, however, be claimed that it was not so much that India was not alerted by the developments in Tibet in 1950 and thereafter; what went wrong was Nehru's abject reliance on diplomacy—the starry-eyed Nehru brand of it—to counter the danger from China to the neglect of the conventional instrument of policy, namely the armed forces.

"Nehru had been carried away by his own hot-gospelling

philosophy of the fifties which assumed that in the present age war had ceased to be an instrument of policy and its place had been taken by personal diplomacy and the conciliation machinery provided by the United Nations."

But Mankekar makes amends and modifies this outright condemnation of Pandit Nehru's handling of China later in his book in the following words :

"This picture of Nehru during the years preceding the 1962 China crisis would, however, be incomplete and thus would do him injustice unless we presented the other side of the medal. For, there is also plenty of evidence of his acute awareness of the Chinese threat to India, of the intermittent efforts he made to take protective measures, short of war, along the Indo-Tibetan border, of his periodical directives to the Defence Ministry and the concerned State Governments to maintain active vigil and establish checkposts at disputed points along the border so as to prevent a *fait accompli* by the Chinese.

"Indeed the Prime Minister, ever since 1954, had been impressing on the Defence Organisation the imperative necessity of physically holding the entire frontier of north-eastern India, by moving up outposts, bringing it under administrative control and paving the way for the emotional integration of the local people.

"It is quite possible that if the Army Headquarters and the Ministry of Defence had acted upon the Prime Minister's instructions issued and desires expressed from 1954 onwards, the situation in Ladakh might have been different.

"In the NEFA border in particular, Nehru had been prodding the Army Headquerter to establish border posts at all the key points along the McMahon Line, so as to assure the Government of India's presence in the disputed border region."

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"He was greatly exercised by the Chinese threat in NEFA and concentrated on consolidating the grip on that remote frontier

region. And he believed that the frontier had been fairly well secured."

The second part of Mankekar's assessment is borne out by Khera also in his book, *India's Defence Problem*. Writing about the Chinese refusal to make the 1954 agreement last for twenty-five years as wanted by Nehru and limiting it to an eight-year period only, Khera says :

"Nehru was disappointed. Also, late in the day as it was, his suspicion about the Chinese intentions were aroused. He stoutly defended the 1954 agreement; but he also gave instructions to set up frontier posts to safeguard the country's northern frontiers."

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"The Army Chiefs do not appear to have become alive early enough to the threat from the north. Their whole training and mental make-up were to shun the possibility of a campaign along the Himalayan heights and on the Tibetan border. The Indian army was, by and large, a plains army and equipped accordingly.

"The Army Chiefs did not consider it a physical proposition at all even to envisage an armed conflict with the Chinese."

Khera supports his point by quoting Thimayya who, even as late as 1962, was reported to have said in a Seminar, "Whereas in the case of Pakistan I have considered the possibility of a total war, I am afraid I cannot do so in regard to China. I cannot even as a soldier envisage India taking on China in an open conflict on its own. It must be left to the politicians and the diplomats to ensure our security."

Khera proceeds :

"Nehru himself after his mission to China in 1954, when the picture of the future had begun to take shape, is reported as

saying, 'I have to see India getting strong; I cannot afford to have the Chinese sitting on my neck across the Himalayas.' 'The threat,' said Nehru, 'is not from Chinese communism but from Chinese nationalism'."

In his dealings with China, therefore, it would be quite contrary to facts to blame Pandit Nehru of following a starry-eyed brand of diplomacy or philosophy. He certainly was a philosopher but he was a realist at the same time and India's interests and security were of much greater concern to him than probably to any other person in India—both because he was the Prime Minister and had the responsibility to secure India's safety and prosperity but also because he loved India as few have ever done.

During the period 1950-54, China and Russia, two of the world's biggest and most powerful countries, were firm allies and Russia was helping China in every possible way to strengthen the latter economically and militarily and even to build up her nuclear capacity. At that time war with one of them would have meant actually fighting against the combined might of these two countries. But the major part of India's small, ill-equipped army at that time was committed against Pakistan. Obviously with this small army India could not fight on two fronts and peace with Pakistan could be ensured only by sacrificing Jammu and Kashmir over which much Indian blood had been shed and which no Indian would agree to give up. Therefore, it would have been sheer misadventure, leading to complete destruction, if India had taken to the path of war against China at that time. With no military might to back up her diplomacy in her dealings with China, naturally India was at a disadvantage and she had to give in on many points, e.g. the unilateral renunciation of extra-territorial rights in Tibet. But Pandit Nehru held fast to what was India's essential interest, that is the frontier as determined by the McMahon Line on the north-east and by the treaty regarding Sikkim and by usage, tradition and old treaties in Bhutan and the western sector and also in Ladakh. On this issue he would never give in. So he had these 2,000 miles of frontier to look after. What attitude could he then adopt towards China? Quoting his

own words, Nehru formulated his policy as follows :

> "Unlike America which had declared an open war against communist countries, India bore no ill-will either against Russia or China. These two countries were allies. They were both our neighbours. America could be absolutely hostile to China and yet there would be no security danger to her. But India had a 2,000 mile frontier with China and had to take care of it. It was quite one thing to take care of a quiet frontier and quite another to defend a hostile frontier. If India had to do the latter, then all her resources would be spent in just defending it. Therefore, in India's national interest, a war must be avoided, especially with the neighbouring countries like Russia and China. At the same time, the Government must ensure that nothing was done in India which would strengthen those subversive and disruptive elements which tended to weaken the country."

This was the view held by Pandit Nehru even as early as 1952. He had foreseen the danger, weighed the various possibilities and had come to the conclusion that it was in India's interest to live in peace with China and in the meantime to strengthen herself. In the development of India's national strength lay not only her own security but also the only hope of resuscitating Tibet as an independent or a semi-independent autonomous country.

That in thinking about the security of India, Pandit Nehru was ever conscious of the potential danger from China, would be apparrent from the advice which he had given me personally in early 1952. In March that year, while speaking to Intelligence officers, he mentioned that every government depended on good Intelligence and he contrasted the woeful lack of intelligence of the Moghul, the Maratha and the Sikh kings or rulers with the accurate Intelligence which the British managed to get about everything in the courts of these potentates and, armed with this Intelligence, even with a small army, could manage to defeat the much bigger forces of these Indian rulers. He also mentioned that the great Chengiz Khan, in his conquest of the whole of north Asia and Eastern Europe, depended on a small army but equip-

ped with accurate information. These illustrations he gave to stress how important it was for the Government to be furnished with proper intelligence. A few days later, in one of my normal meetings with the Prime Minister, I thanked him for that advice but mentioned that no Intelligence, particularly working in the external field, could operate properly unless it was given targets by the Government, and I complained that so far we had not been given any targets and we were, therefore, in some difficulty to judge which country was our friend and which our foe, both from the short and long-term points of view, because political alliances and friendships changed frequently in the international field. The Prime Minister asked me what targets I would fix if I were given the choice. I mentioned that my targets would be Pakistan, China and Russia and I gave my reasons.

The Prime Minister agreed with me as regards Pakistan and China. Referring to the latter, he narrated its past history for the previous 2,000 years and said that China had always been a very aggressive country and had all through the ages tried to extend her boundaries by conquering or subjugating territories on its periphery. She had at one time claimed the whole of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, part of North Bengal, whole of Assam, Burma, Malaya, Thailand, Indo-China, etc. as being Chinese territory. She had also claimed jurisdiction over certain parts of the old Turkistan and Siberia which were now under Soviet Russia. China never believed in treating other countries on equal terms. Therefore, as soon as she succeeded in achieving a certain amount of political and economic stability, she would try to extend her influence and leadership over the rest of Asia and even suzerainty over some of the peripheral territories. In this struggle for supremacy in Asia, the biggest obstacle in her way would be India. He mentioned that a continuous tussle had gone on between Indian and Chinese cultures for over 2,000 years in Central Asia, Tibet, Burma and the whole of South-East Asia. These were countries where Indian cultural influence had been supreme during the times of the Hindu and the Buddhist dynasties. There were Hindu kingdoms in Cambodia and Java. But India had never used force to extend her culture or territory. When main-

land India became weak and subsequently came under Muslim rulers, who had no interest in maintaining Indian culture in these areas, the Chinese had very much their own way and by adopting aggressive measures had nearly uprooted Indian culture from those parts. But this war between the two cultures was not over and was still going on and would go on for a long time and no one could foretell what would be the final outcome. Many of the countries in South-East Asia, over which China formerly claimed sovereignty, were now independent and looked to India for leadership. China knew that if she could prove her superiority over India in the political and economic fields, she would be able to re-establish her influence in these countries. The aggressive leadership of China might even take a short-cut method and occupy these territories on some pretext or other, and, under conditions of occupation, force them to accept Chinese hegemony. Though China was a part of the international Communist world and was talking of Communism, Pandit Nehru had no doubt in his mind that Communism or international Communism for the Chinese was only a cloak for furthering their own national interests. They would support Communism in any country in so far as it assisted them in extending their influence in that country, and, in the case of India, to subvert it internally. The Prime Minister referred to the unsettled boundaries between India and China, which extended to over 2,000 miles and which China had shown no intention of formally recognising. It was true that the Chinese hold on Tibet was still not secure, but as soon as she could properly consolidate her position she would try to extend her influence into those areas which had been claimed by China in her maps as falling within the Chinese sphere of influence. It was, therefore, necessary for us to develop our own administration in these areas as rapidly as possible so that when the Chinese threat appeared they would find a fully developed administration able to take care of itself. On the other hand, it was vital for India to have peace for at least twenty years for stabilising her own economy and placing the country on the road to progress and for this purpose he had gone out of his way to maintain friendly relations with China. He, however, warned us that we should

never be deluded by Chinese assertions of friendship and we should always be prepared to counter Chinese claims against Indian territory. He mentioned that he himself was trying his best to get China admitted in the United Nations as he felt that it would be the best way to contain her aggressiveness. He stressed that we should be extremely careful so that China did not exploit India's friendship to our disadvantage. She might take this opportunity to weaken our position in the frontier regions and build up hostile groups within our own country. He also mentioned that the northern frontiers, which had remained dead all through the ages, had suddenly become alive and was likely to become troublesome in the future and, therefore, it was important that the administration as well as the Intelligence Organisation should be properly established in these areas.

That this was not all talk and indicated the seriousness with which Pandit Nehru viewed the developments in Tibet was proved by the fact that when immediately afterwards we moved for the formation of our external Intelligence wing, he promptly sanctioned staff for collecting Intelligence from Tibet and China. Therefore, so far as Intelligence was concerned, our line was quite clear. We always kept at the back of our minds that China was a potentially hostile country and we had to secure not only all our frontiers but had to be well placed for obtaining information regarding Chinese activities in Tibet and also in other countries bordering India like Nepal, Burma, Pakistan, Ceylon, etc. where we had security, cultural, economic and other interests.

A year later I was scheduled to visit Darjeeling-Kalimpong area and I asked the Prime Minister for advice whether I should contact the Dalai Lama's brother who was then residing in Darjeeling as a refugee and who had expressed a desire to meet me. The Prime Minister readily agreed. He added that during the last one thousand years China had never really been able to subdue Tibet, though on many occasions in the past the Tibetans had succumbed to Chinese military pressure. He was doubtful that the Chinese would be able to do it even now. He was, therefore, very keen that the morale of the Tibetans was kept up. He instructed me to keep in touch with the Dalai Lama's brother

and all the other Tibetan refugees and help them in every way possible. Such contacts would also indirectly help us to prevent any machinations by them from the Indian soil against the Chinese. He referred to his previous talks about Intelligence targets and said that this would seem to be a little contradictory to the professions of friendship between India and China. He explained that he really wanted to be friendly to China, but he apprehended that the Chinese might misuse that friendship and so we must always be on our guard. He wanted us to understand clearly and follow this line of policy and he assured me that we could always be certain of his support if we were in any difficulty. Of course he could not express these apprehensions openly nor could he put them down in writing, as they might jeopardise the success of the policy he had decided to follow. We however worked on this advice and followed his line and were never let down even when we were opposed by other Ministries. My contact with the Dalai Lama's brother also proved to be of much benefit to us from the security point of view.

In May, 1954, I again visited the Darjeeling-Kalimpong-Gangtok area to assess the reactions amongst the local Indians and Sikkimese and refugee Tibetans to the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954. I found the Tibetans shocked and anguished. They felt that they had been let down badly by India though they had reposed their trust in her. Their feelings have been described by me in an earlier chapter. Though bitter, the Tibetans saw India's difficulty also and sought for some assurances from India which could help to keep up their morale. They desired that the Tibetan refugees should be allowed to enter India freely and would not be surrendered to the Chinese on the latter's demand. Secondly, that the Tibetans should be allowed to transfer their money and valuable property to India for safe deposit and that these should be exempted from the provisions of currency, customs and income tax rules. Thirdly, that responsible Indian leaders should issue statements stressing that the cultural relations and ties between India and Tibet were eternal and would not change due to the Chinese occupation of the country. The fourth point was that India should openly criticise the Chinese violation of

the 17-point Agreement with Tibet. The fifth point was that the Dalai Lama's purchasing mission in Kalimpong should exist as a separate entity and should be given a status equal to that of the Chinese Agent. The Tibetans were also anxious to maintain their opposition to the Chinese. They knew that they could not get any material help from India but they felt that even moral support would sustain them in their fight.

I also found the Indians in the border areas of Kalimpong and Darjeeling to be full of misgivings. It was generally apprehended that the Chinese Trade Agent at Kalimpong would indulge in espionage and intrigues in this sensitive northern area. There was a separatist movement in those parts which the Chinese were sure to encourage. Traders also felt that the entire trade pattern between India and Tibet would change. So far this had been conducted between the private traders of Tibet and India. Now the Chinese Government, through the Chinese Banks in Calcutta and Kalimpong, would control the trade and render the trade marts in Tibet ineffective and all the purchase and exchange of commodities would have to be done in Kalimpong itself.

On my return to Delhi, I reported these reactions to the Government. The Prime Minister sent for me a few days later and enquired whether my report was based only on the views expressed by some rich Tibetans who had come over to India. I told him that this report was based on the statements of not only the rich refugees who were a handful, but of hundreds of ordinary Tibetans who were crossing into India everyday and consisted of traders, muleteers and pilgrims and, therefore, the views obtained from such a large number of people represented fairly the views generally of the Tibetan population. The Prime Minister then said that the Tibetans hated the Chinese and would never submit to them. The very nature of the country rendered the inhabitants tough and hardy, and it would be impossible for the Chinese to colonise that country. But it would be unwise for the Tibetans to carry on any armed resistance which the Chinese would be able to put down swiftly, effectively and ruthlessly. The Prime Minister then instructed that the Tibetan refugees of all classes should be given an assurance that they would not be handed over

to the Chinese even if the latter demanded their surrender. As regards the property of the refugees, the Prime Minister held the view that these could be exempted from the customs, currency and income tax rules and they should be allowed to bring in gold, silver and money freely just as many moneyed people of Nepal were doing. Regarding the spirit of resistance in Tibet, the Prime Minister was of the view that even if these refugees helped their brethren inside Tibet, the Government of India would not take any notice and, unless they compromised themselves too openly, no Chinese protest would be entertained. He, however, suggested that the best form of resistance would be through nonviolence and struggle for the protection of Tibetan culture and regional autonomy and not by taking of arms which would give the Chinese an excuse to use their military might to suppress the poor Tibetans. He referred to our military weakness due to which it was not possible to give any military assistance to Tibet.

These directions would prove that there was no ambiguity in Pandit Nehru's thinking nor was his philosophy starry-eyed. He hated war and he admitted that this was a part of his make-up. But he did not resort to prayers only to avoid it. He knew that in the prevalent state of the world, wars sometimes became inevitable. And when unwanted wars came, he did not at all hesitate to send his forces in. If the army thought that it was in no position to take on China, what alternative had Nehru other than diplomacy? He had seen the humiliations China had suffered at the hands of foreign invaders on her soil. He genuinely wanted China to take her proper and rightful place in the comity of nations. At the same time he completely disapproved of China's Tibet policy. But he was helpless. He had no army that he could use to check the Chinese. Exchange of angry notes would have had only an adverse effect. So he adopted a friendly posture. But it was not a mask, because he genuinely wanted to befriend China against the imperialists. But Tibet had to be saved. It could not be saved by an outright hostile attitude without the backing of bayonets. But more important was that India's frontiers must be guarded. That frontier was inviolable and he would never give in on that issue. Every inch of that frontier was sacred

to him and had to be protected. Nor would he allow Tibet to go under completely. But the only way to raise Tibet again on her feet was to make India strong. It was only through India's strength that Tibetan autonomy could be re-established. But he required time to build up India. Any protracted war at this time would not only retard but completely stop India's economic growth and she would be at the mercy of China and other great powers.

Critics of Nehru say that he should have aligned India with other powerful countries. Which was that country? There were then and are still only three militarily powerful countries—USA, USSR, and China. Alignment with Russia against China was not feasible then as these two were firm allies. Alignment with the USA would certainly have brought some American arms into India but the Americans would not have fought India's battles in Ladakh and NEFA against China. America was then implacably hostile to China, but this hostility brought no security danger to her as she had the Pacific Ocean as a barrier. But Russia and China were India's neighbours. Danger from any one of them was serious enough. Their combined power would have been irresistible. And India had a hostile Pakistan on her flanks, ever ready to pounce on her and have her pound of flesh. Unless the Sino-Russian alliance was neutralised, there could be no security for India and alignment with America would produce just the opposite effect. It would have further strengthened the Sino-Soviet friendship and alliance.

So Pandit Nehru steadfastly pursued the policy of non-alignment. In this connection, talking to us in 1955 the Prime Minister told us that some of the policies followed by the USA were creating tensions in the international fields. He said that this came from a wrong assumption by some people in authority in America that the conflict was between Communism and anti-Communism. This was not correct as the conflict was really between mighty powers—USA and her allies on one side and China and Russia on the other. China and Russia would talk of Communism to undermine other countries but they would really be guided by their national interests and not by the interests of world Commu-

nism. He said that the extreme anti-Communism of America would not bring about a situation of no-Communism in the world but would only serve to keep up the present hostility and cold-war between the Communist countries on the one side and the capitalist on the other. He said ultimately Communism and capitalism must shed some of their extreme forms and approach each other and settle down and live together. He cited the example of the Hundred Years' War in Europe between the Protestants and the Catholics during which there was much killing but ultimately in most of the European countries the two were living peacefully side by side. He considered that it would be unwise for India under such circumstances to align herself with one country or the other and, therefore, India preferred to follow the path of nonalignment with any of these countries and of friendly relations with all countries to develop as big an area of peace as possible.

Pandit Nehru not only visited the United States of America but also China in 1954 and Russia in June, 1955. In the latter country, as the undisputed leader of a nation which had fought imperialism and gained its liberty, he was received with great cordiality and enthusiasm by the people at large and he succeeded in creating a lasting understanding between India and Soviet-Russia. The results of this visit were far-reaching and are often not properly comprehended. It is often dismissed as Nehru's immature effort at personal diplomacy. But if one looks at it dispassionately and historically, one can clearly see the chain of some very important and completely astonishing results that followed. The first thing that happened was that Bulganin and Khrushchev made a prolonged return visit to India later in 1955. Referring to this historic visit, Pandit Nehru told us that this was the first time that two great leaders from this Communist country had come out of their homes. They came to a country which, though it followed a different policy, was friendly to them and gave them a great welcome. They were impressed in many ways but a lasting impression which they carried with them was that even a country which followed a different policy could be friendly. They also saw in India industrial, cultural and other deve-

lopments and found that there was dynamism everywhere and she was making good progress. Above all they were impressed by the fact that the Indians were free and happy. The Government was a popular government and the people gave the two Soviet leaders a great welcome. Bulganin and Khrushchev had confided to the Prime Minister that they had changed their opinion about India completely after their visit. (Though the *Soviet Encyclopaedia* earlier carried a very adverse and offensive remark about Mahatma Gandhi, after this visit it changed its views and wrote praising Gandhi's efforts for India's liberation.) The visit of these two leaders to Burma and their talks with U Nu had also impressed them greatly. The two leaders assured these governments that they would not, in any way, support the local Communists in their subversive action against the governments though being Communists themselves they were sympathetic towards them. They knew the local Communists were following a foolish path. The immediate and pressing need for these countries was to shake off their economic bondage and this was no time to fight about different forms of Socialism.

It was the exchange of these visits that not only brought about a close understanding between these two countries, but also convinced the Soviet leaders that even a country following a non-communist path could also be friendly and proved the unsoundness of the doctrine that "if you are not with me then you are against me". It also showed that a country could be friendly and helpful even without being a formal ally and finally made the Soviet leaders realise that with these countries the Soviet Union could co-exist peacefully. Though other forces like the utter destructive power of the atom bomb must have also exercised influence on the thinking of the Soviet leaders, there is no doubt that this new understanding of the world forces, as they existed in the mid-fifties, gained on Indian soil, went to the shaping of the new international policy which was enunciated at the XX Congress of the Soviet Communist Party held in February, 1956. It was in this Congress that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), for the first time, gave up its previous dogmatic and rigid attitude to international relations inherited from Stalin, rejected

the theory that war between Communism and Capitalism was inevitable and accepted the proposition that the two systems could co-exist peacefully, possibly for a long time. It was in this Congress that the seeds of the final rupture between China and Russia were sown though it took some time for the seeds to sprout.

In the World Conference of the Communist Parties held in Moscow in November, 1957, the Chinese did not easily accept the new line enunciated at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Party and stuck to the theory that war between the two systems was inevitable. However, the Russians had prepared their ground well and, after a great deal of discussion, ultimately the Russian view was generally accepted with some modifications to accommodate the Chinese objections. Though a compromise was arrived at on the surface, all through the years 1958-59, the two parties, i.e. the Russian and the Chinese, went on propagating their different views. The Russians criticised the hasty establishment of communes in China and the Chinese criticised the Russians for not going all out against the Americans and the British in 1959 in the Syrian revolt. Then came the now famous statement, issued by the Tass on September 9, 1959, on the Longju incident in which Russia deprecated bloodshed between allies (China) and friends (India). China was shocked. She considered this neutral attitude of Soviet Russia to be a betrayal. By this time, Sino-Indian relations were at a low ebb and further outrages took place on the Indo-Tibetan border. The Russians came out with more statements deprecating the bloodshed. To show goodwill to India, Soviet leaders Voroshilov, Kozlov and Madame Furtseva visited India in January, 1960. Khrushchev also visited India a month later and stressed Indo-Soviet friendship. The Soviet press called these visits significant of the growing ties between India and the socialist camp for peace.

Consequently recriminations increased between the Russians and the Chinese and the breaking point was reached at the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) meeting in Peking in June, 1960, and at the Third Congress of the Rumanian Communist Party at Bucharest a little later the same month. At the Bucharest Conference there were hard exchanges between Khrushchev

and Peng Chen. Here it was decided that another conference of the World Communist Parties would be held in Moscow in November, 1960. Earlier Soviet Russia had withdrawn all the technicians she had sent to China on the ground that China had tried to subvert them politically. This affected Chinese industrial development and the war industry adversely for some time.

The Second Moscow Conference marked the point of no return for the Russians and the Chinese in their long and bitter struggle. Strong speeches were delivered and the breach widened into a yawning gap. There was no question of bridging it. The final blow was struck at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU in October, 1961, from which Chou En-lai walked out. China then made big claims against certain Russian territories in Siberia and in Tadzhikstan and Kazakstan which the Russians repudiated. Both countries moved their troops to the frontier and the confrontation had started. It was no longer American imperialism alone which was China's enemy. She thereafter equated Russian revisionism and Indian reactionarism with American imperialism.

In another field also this policy of nonalignment gave India immense dividends. Pandit Nehru told us that with the changing Russian policy towards international communism, the immediate effect would be that in the international sphere the Soviet Government would not like anything to happen which would go against the Government of India and India generally, and as India did not approve of the Baghdad Pact which was directed against Russia, so Russia would not agree to anything happening in the international sphere which went against India's interests. His anticipation proved to be correct and, for the next ten years, Russia supported India's case against Pakistan on Kashmir in the United Nations. It was another great victory for Pandit Nehru's policy of nonalignment. When China started openly supporting the dictatorship in Pakistan against India, it also proved what Pandit Nehru had said that communism was only a cloak under which these big powers would try to extend their national interests and when their national interests came in conflict with the interests of international communism, they would have no hesitation to discard the latter.

Internally also Pandit Nehru was sure that the Russians would not encourage any opposition against the Government. Khrushchev had denied any active Russian assistance to the Indian communists though he had said that he sympathised with them as he himself was a Communist, but Russia had no desire to interfere in the policy of the Communist Party of India. The Prime Minister hoped that, with this attitude of the Soviet Union, the strong ideological basis, which was the practical feature for Communism in India among the youth, would disappear and the Communist Party of India would not be able to plot its course with that clarity of mind as it had exhibited in the past and would be confused over the policy it should adopt *vis-a-vis* the Indian Government. This turned out to be true and the Communist Party went on dithering in its policy till the open hostility of the Chinese to India and Russia gave a section of the party another ideological fountainhead, i.e. Maoism.

Thus the wisdom of Pandit Nehru's policy of nonalignment, in spite of the many frowns it encountered both at home and abroad, and the far-reaching consequences which flowed from it and which certainly were of advantage to India in her own national interests, can be easily recognised if one dispassionately studies these developments in their proper and chronological sequence. Pandit Nehru had foreseen, that apart from internal strength, the only external source of security for India against China was Russia. No other foreign assistance would be of any avail against the combined might of Russia and China. Kautilya had said, "cultivate the friendship of your neighbour's neighbour". Pandit Nehru assiduously followed that policy and achieved one of the signal diplomatic victories of history in winning the solid friendship of Soviet Russia against Russia's "firm ally", Communist China.

13 Clouds on the Horizon

PANDIT NEHRU HAD GIVEN us the guidelines for our security work *vis-a-vis* China and we pursued this aim with single-minded effort. As our resources at the beginning (as explained in Chapter 9) were meagre and we started practically from scratch, it took us considerable time to build up our organisation to cope fully with the threat from China. But as our resources position improved, we went on covering larger areas every year till by the end of 1958 we had occupied posts practically all along the frontier from Karakoram in Ladakh in the north to Kibithoo in NEFA in the north-east. Jointly with the Sikkim Police we held posts all along the frontier in Sikkim and we covered the passes in Nepal along with the Nepal Army. We had our posts at all the important passes in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab and all the passes in South-East Ladakh touching Tibet. However, a gap remained. Whereas along the rest of the frontier the areas were inhabited almost right up to the frontier and, therefore, our check-posts went up to the last inhabited village, which might be only a mile or two short of the pass, in Ladakh, excepting in the south-eastern area, most of the north-eastern and northern areas known as Lingzi Tang, Aksai Chin, Soda Plains and Depsang Plains were completely devoid of any population or even vegetation. The statement that not a blade of grass grew in this area was correct. These places were at an average elevation of over 15,000 feet and there were several passes between 18,000 to 20,000 feet which had to be crossed immediately after leaving Ladakh valley proper to reach these longitudinal flat valleys which were more easily accessible from Sinkiang. The Army in those days had only a militia battalion in Leh and did not hold any post outside the Ladakh valley. Supplies could be received in Leh only by air and had to be transported to distances of more than 150 miles

to reach these areas. Even if we made all efforts to supply our posts from Leh using mule transport, the total number of posts which could be maintained in this way was limited to the carrying capacity of the Indian Air Force which was very low those days and the IAF had to meet the demands of the Army and the administration as well. Moreover, our equipment in those days was poor and proper clothing to enable people to live at heights of over 15,000 feet in winter was till then not being manufactured in India. There was no fuel in those areas and so the only heating arrangement was by burning kerosene, large quantities of which had to be transported to these long distances after they had been landed at Leh. We had no reliable wireless sets which could function at these heights and stand the effects of temperature which went down even thirty degrees below the freezing point in winter. So the posts remained out of touch with Leh, and had to depend on runners who might take two months to come and go back if they succeeded in reaching the destination and did not perish on the way. In any case, communication for over six months in a year from the end of October to the middle of June over the passes was impossible. The only way these posts could be properly maintained was by the use of helicopters able to function at these heights and these were not yet available and the only way communication could be maintained was by using proper of wireless sets which we could not get. So opening permanent posts in these uninhabitated high lands of Aksai Chin, Soda Plains, etc., apart from the fact that they would be of little use for most of the year, was very difficult for us even as late as 1958.

Therefore, in this bare and arid region of north and north-eastern Ladakh we worked an alternative plan of extensive patrolling in the summer. Every year our patrol parties set out from Leh and trekked along the northern route towards Karakoram, the north-eastern route to Aksai Chin, Lingzi Tang, etc. and the eastern route to Lanak La, etc. The physical feat of repeating these journeys year after year, with the equipment and transport available those days, was astonishing, and Karam Singh, DCIO, who led these parties deserved the highest credit for his pioneering work. All old maps were generally defective. He discovered

new routes, scaled passes which did not exist in the maps then available and charted new maps. As mentioned earlier, these areas had been incompletely surveyed up to 1910 but the maps were often defective because of the defective surveying methods of those days. It was only as a result of Karam Singh's efforts that the maps were rectified. Our present knowledge of this area grew out of his commendable efforts. The patrol parties were often out of communication with Leh for over three months as they had no wireless sets. After despatching the patrol from Leh we remained anxious for its safety till we heard that the party had returned to the base. The only animal that could be used for transport of food was the goat, which could live off the moss that grew on the otherwise bare hillsides and could pick out bits of grass even in the snow. Bigger animals like ponies could not live off this land and consumed much larger quantities, and all that food had to be carried, and the total load each pony could carry on its back over these heights would not suffice even for its own food for three months. In order to reduce weight, the party did not carry any arms except a shotgun to fell a wild goat or buck for food. However, they hardly ever got any. I hope that some day someone will take more interest and write a full narrative of all the perilous journeys which these brave civilian soldiers of India made to guard against armed intrusions by the hostile Chinese against our land.

In setting up the checkposts all along the frontier, as we then understood its location, we often came in conflict with both the Army Headquarters and the Ministry of External Affairs. We were often accused of going into disputed territory or trespassing beyond our borders though, except that some of the patrols did sometimes cross into Tibet or Sinkiang due to the faulty nature of the maps, we had located the checkposts within our claimed frontier. If we went too near the frontier, we would be accused of causing provocations. We did not give in and our contention was that as the responsibility for guarding the frontier had been given to us, we were free to open the posts wherever we thought they would serve us best and we did not require a formal clearance in each case as an overall clearance had already been

given. Where exactly the post was to be sited depended on the lie of the land, on its elevation, on the command of routes, availability of water and shelter and this could be decided only by the officer at the spot and not by discussing the question in files. Moreover, once we claimed a territory to be our own, we were free to go and open our post there, no matter whether the Chinese disputed our claims and raised protests. If we had asked for a specific sanction in each case, months would have been lost in futile discussions, the file going from one Ministry to another, all sorts of persons coming to know of our intention to open a particular post and the Chinese probably forestalling us. We must admit that the Ministry of Home Affairs invariably supported us in our arguments and we were also quite confident that finally when the dispute referred to the Prime Minister he would decide in our favour because we were only carrying out the orders specifically given by him to me. This is what happened on more than one occasion when the Army Headquarters or the External Affairs Ministry reported against us to the Prime Minister. The file came back with the note that as we had already opened the post we need not withdraw from it but we should be careful to see that we did not trespass into Chinese territory. The same thing happened in the case of patrols. In these areas, as the frontier was only a vague line in the map and even the map was incorrect, it sometimes happened that the patrol parties stepped beyond India's claimed frontier before they could realise that they had come into foreign soil. In these cases also when reports went against us, the Prime Minister just returned the file without any comments. In a particular case when Karam Singh went right up to Malik Shah about 40 miles inside Sinkiang (still within our claimed boundary prior to 1937), and the External Affairs Ministry were very angry, the Prime Minister commented that the patrol party must have been misled by the faulty nature of the map supplied to it. And so further trouble was averted. The Prime Minister recognised the work of these patrols and his encouraging words spurred Karam Singh's brave patrolmen on to more strenuous efforts. He gave Karam Singh the medal for gallantry and, praising such difficult and hazardous

undertakings, said that when an individual or a nation did not take risks that individual or nation started going down.

While we were continually trying to improve the security of the frontiers by taking our checkposts to the farthest possible limit with the resources available to us in those days, our next responsibility was to collect intelligence from inside Tibet to ascertain what the Chinese were doing militarily and what their intentions could be. This intelligence would cover political, economic and military matters. We must admit that up to 1958 we were almost at the start with our monitoring and other mechanical methods of intelligence. Foreign exchange was scarce for purchasing equipment from abroad. Our training facilities were also limited due to want of funds and shortage of instructors. The number of Chinese- and Tibetan-knowing officers in our staff was small and our resources for analysis and interpretation were also not developed. The result was that we were not yet in a position to monitor all the wireless messages of the Chinese in Tibet and Sinkiang because we did not have all the personnel and the equipment required, and we could not translate more than twenty per cent of the messages so monitored due to acute shortage of Chinese-knowing staff. We were also not properly staffed to evaluate some of the technical aspects of intelligence like the carrying capacity of roads, the carrying capacity of a fleet of trucks over long distances, requirement of diesel and petrol, etc. The proper organisation where this assessment could and should really have been done was the Directorate of Military Intelligence. But that organisation was also suffering from similar handicaps. So with the full approval of the Prime Minister and the then Secretary-General, we turned to some friendly countries to do the evaluation of these technical aspects for us till we could build up our own organisation and train our staff. And cooperation from these friends was ungrudgingly given.

But in one respect we were more fortunate. We were better placed those days for securing information through human agencies and by observation of Chinese activities in Tibet. Movements of Tibetans to and from India were still continuing which facilitated collection of good Intelligence. The externed members

of the Dalai Lama's Cabinet had their own sources inside Tibet and this information was at our disposal, thanks to the foresight of Prime Minister Nehru who had advised us as early as 1953 to keep in close contact with and be friendly to them. Our own sources could penetrate deep into Tibet and could go even up to Chamdo, Jyekunda, Gartok, etc. and so, except the northern steppes, there was no part of Tibet which was outside our observation. Hence the lack of Intelligence through monitoring and other mechanical means was more than offset by the Intelligence which we were able to gather those days through human agencies. We had accurate information about the Chinese positions all over Tibet, the exact strength of their garrisons and quite a lot of details about their armament, stocks of ammunition and food, the relationship with the people and communication and trade. So there was no lack of Intelligence and no blind spot about Chinese preparations in Tibet. But often there was a good deal of delay in getting some of the information. If we wanted to know the state of rebellion in Chamdo, we had to infiltrate a source across and he had to play hide and seek with the Chinese before he could reach Chamdo—and this might take him well over two months. After a stay of some time he had to start his return journey—which also would take two months or more if he was not interrupted on the way. Again such journeys would be possible only in summer. So sometimes information received in the autumn months could not be verified till the next summer. Of course, for areas near the border the position was better. But here also in the absence of wireless communication, relaying of this information from the checkpost to the base headquarters took time. However, this was not of much consequence in respect of strategic intelligence. All this intelligence was fed to the Ministry of External Affairs and the Army Headquarters both in the form of source reports and finished assessment. Both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister (Pandit Pant) were keen recipients of this Intelligence and I often had long talks and discussions with them about Chinese preparations. Pandit Pant's analytical mind would like to see every information plotted and shown in maps and statements, and these were regularly prepared and

shown to him.

There has been some criticism that Intelligence failed to get information in time about the Aksai Chin Road. This is not correct. Immediately after the Chinese Communist forces "liberated" Sinkiang, it was reported by us that with the help of Russian engineers the Chinese were developing road communication in Sinkiang. Chou En-lai had claimed in 1960 that Chinese troops had entered Western Tibet as early as October, 1950, by the Aksai Chin Road. But in this he was pulling a fast one. Unfortunately, without verifying Chou En-lai's claim, some writers have accepted this assertion true. There is irrefutable evidence that the Chinese did not enter Gargunsa in western Tibet till June, 1951. These troops came not through Aksai Chin but from Khotan (Hotien) via Keriya, Nurmat Langar, Polur, Aqsu, Khizil Pass, Baba Hatim, Kokyar Pass, Altoon Pasha, Yashil Tso, Ibrahim Kol, Jawaza, Dung Ming, Zama Mangbo, Mense to Gargunsa. This route at no point passed within one hundred miles of the north-eastern frontier of Ladakh. The Chinese had first tried to open this route to motor traffic but encountered many engineering difficulties. Soon after their arrival at Gargunsa, the Chinese started prospecting for a direct route to Gartok via Rudok from Sinkiang along an old silk route which existed part of the way. Chinese surveyors were noticed near Rudok surveying the possibility of opening this route for motor traffic in October, 1951. The first mule caravan using this route arrived at Rudok from Sinkiang in April, 1952. Then the Chinese decided to discard the Hotien-Keriya-Polur-Dun Ming-Gargunsa road and decided to go all out for this shorter route via Aksai Chin. After this the regular change-over of troops from Yarkhand to Western Tibet started through this route though the movements were yet on foot or animals as the motor road had not yet been constructed. In November, 1952, we reported that the Chinese had engaged 2,000 labourers to develop this route into a jeep track and they planned to complete the construction by 1953. In December, 1952, we reported that the jeep-track from Sinkiang to Amtogar had been completed and the Chinese were working to bring the road to Rudok. In 1953, we reported that the jeep track to

Rudok had been completed and regular jeep traffic had commenced. It was because of these troop movements and the road building activity that the Chinese had refused to allow a trade mart to be opened at Rudok.

All through 1953-54 the Chinese were improving and constructing the road from Sinkiang to the Ladakh border (Haji Langar). There were two routes, both starting from Yarkhand. The route was the same up to Karghalik where it bifurcated. One branch went direct east to Hotien and then came down south, crossed the Kuen Lun mountains at Yangi Pass and came into Ladakh border at Haji Langar. The other branch first took a southernly direction from Karghalik, then turned east, passed through Kengshewar, entered north Ladakh near Qarakash river and joined the first route at Haji Langar. It was the second route which was used mostly for traffic between Sinkiang and western Tibet. The Indian Trade Agent at Gartok reported in July and again in September, 1955, that he had been told by the Chinese Vice-Chief of the Foreign Bureau of Ngari (Western Tibet) that they were going to construct the Sinkiang-Gartok road via Rudok as it was shorter than the Lhasa-Rudok road. He again reported in September, basing himself on the same source, that the Chinese had started work on this road. It was also in that year that the Chinese Transport Officer had told the Tibetans that Gartok would be linked with Sinkiang within two years and that the work on this road had been started from the summer of 1955.

In January, 1956, our sources reported the working of survey parties between Rudok and Gartok and it was learnt that this was for connecting Yarkhand with Gartok. By June, 1956, it was learnt that the road from Hotien up to Karnang, north of Yangi Pass, had been completed. In July it was reported that the road from Sinkiang to Gartok was near completion. In March, 1957, the Chinese first announced the completion of their Sinkiang-Tibet highway without mentioning the alignment. In August the Trade Agent at Gartok reported that the Gartok-Rudok road was almost complete and the Chinese hoped to run a through motor service from October onwards and that they laid great importance on this road as being vital to them. On October 6, 1957, the

Sinkiang-Gartok road was formally opened with a ceremony at Gartok and twelve trucks on a trial run from Yarkhand reached Gartok. The road was reported to be 1,170 kilometres long. In January, 1958, the New China News Agency (NCNA) reported that the Sinkiang-Tibet highway had been opened two months earlier and the road was being fully utilised. In February, 1958, sources reported that troops were being utilised to widen and improve this road.

We must, however, admit that though our sources, and even our staff, had personally visited the road from Gartok to Rudok and up to a point parallel to Lanak La, i.e. more or less the point at which the road entered Aksai Chin from the south, no police party had actually traversed the portion of the road within the Aksai Chin itself. There were three ways how this could be done. The easiest would be to cross Lanak La into western Tibet, which was indisputably Chinese territory, strike the road some miles east of that pass and then travel north along the road. The party ran the almost certain risk of encountering the Chinese. The second alternative was to go up to Haji Langar in the northern end where this road entered Aksai Chin from the Hotien side and travel southwards. The party would have to come back by the same route but again would run the certain risk of encountering the Chinese and being captured. The third would be to strike direct east from Shamul Lungpa, cross two mountain ranges and come to the fresh water lake, Sarigh Jilganang Kol. Going further east, the party would strike this road. Travelling south and then north, the whole of this route could be traversed without at any point going beyond Indian territory. But on this occasion also the party would run the risk of encountering the Chinese, though in our own territory. The easiest was the first course and this was the route the Ladakhis had taken for decades to go to Amtogar to collect salt. But as explained above a part of this route would lie through indisputably Chinese territory. Regarding the other two routes, in those days the available resources did not permit us to do the trek up to Haji Langar and then along this road to Amtogar, back to Haji Langar and then back to Leh, or to go from Shamul Lungpa to Salig Jilganang Kol and

then traverse the road north and south and come out again by the way of Shamul Lungpa. Though we had a good idea on the map about the alignment of this road as the two ends were known and we had traced it in our maps, no member of our staff had actually traversed this part of the road. Only sources had travelled a few miles from the Lanak La side to fix the southern entry point.

However, enough information was available about the construction of the road right from 1951 to 1957, when the road was formally declared open. But though it was also known that the Chinese laid great stress on the construction of this road which they considered to be vital, its implications to India's security in the Ladakh region were not properly comprehended at any level. All through these years no questions were raised by the Army Headquarters or the Ministry of External Affairs about this road. It was only after the road had been completed and heavy traffic had started plying that some attention was turned on it though even then, as will be apparent from the account that follows, it was only considered to be of nuisance value and not one that affected our security.

I have mentioned earlier that year after year we used to send our patrol parties during the summer to check infiltrations. Excepting the north-eastern Aksai Chin area which the patrol parties had not visited, no sign of Chinese infiltration was noticed anywhere up to 1956. In fact, a patrol party going to Lanak La in June, 1956, found that the flag put up there by a party in 1954 was still flying though very much battered due to weather. But on August 29 that year, for the first time, the patrol party saw signs of a Chinese survey party having come up to Mebdo La, about two marches from Lanak La, in Indian territory. Actually the Chinese had not come from Lanak La but from the Niazi and Dambuguru side and had claimed Khurnak fort to be in their territory though it was undisputedly Indian. In September unmistakable signs of a Chinese survey party having camped earlier at a nala called Zulung Khongma were found. Further on similar marks were found at Chhuzungpo Kongma. It was not yet clear whether the Chinese were trying to fix their boundary

with Ladakh or were surveying for opening a road through Lanak La or Niazi towards the west, probably up to Hot Springs or Shamul Lungpa.

Alarmed by this sign of Chinese penetration in our territory, next year we made more elaborate arrangements for patrols to go to the frontier in all directions. We built up an advance post at Hot Springs, two marches from Phobrang, and the party went to Shamul Lungpa, Dehra Compass, Shinglung, Sumdo, then along the Qara Kash river to Malik Shah almost forty miles inside Sinkiang. Tell-tale signs of fresh Chinese intrusion were found at Dehra Compass, Khizil Zilga and north and south of Khizil Zilga, Shinglung and between Shinglung and Sumdo. Signs were also found near the Qarakash river of an area having been marked on the dry bed of the river apparently for small planes to land. This was serious because the southern-most intrusion had taken the Chinese over 70 miles inside Indian territory. When judged against the intrusion noticed the previous year, it also became apparent that the Chinese surveyors were trying to find a route from Haji Langar through Sumdo, Shinglung, Dehra Compass and Shamul Lungpa to link up with a road from Lanak La via Khongka La to Shamul Lungpa. This road would go parallel to the claimed Chinese boundary deep within Indian territory.

The report of the patrol party was available in early 1958, and we reported this to the Government in March, 1958, and recommended that a protest should be lodged with the Chinese Government against this serious trespass. We also recommended that in future at least two expeditions should be sent every year over this area—one by the army and the other by the ITB police with Intelligence officers attached to each. We also recommended that a proper map of the area should be made from the reports of the various expeditions which had been sent by us, that shacks should be constructed at camping places for accommodating officers and men who would be out on patrol and who had no place for halting; that the Phobrang frontier post should be strengthened and a summer post should be opened at Hot Springs as we felt that this would be more or less the link-up point between the

possible routes coming from Lanak La in the east and from Haji Langar in the north. On our own we left secret caches of food, kerosene, fuel and other indestructible material at Hot Springs to serve as the spring-board for our operations next summer.

This report was discussed in the External Affairs Ministry with the CGS present. The line taken by the Ministry was that the exact boundary of this area had not yet been demarcated and so in any protest we lodged we could not be on firm grounds. Probably the infiltrations had been made by over-zealous survey officers and did not indicate anything more serious. Moreover, as we were not physically controlling this area it would be useless to make any formal protest. The Chinese were sure to reject it and claim the territory as their own. The army's attitude was that they could send an occasional patrol but they were in no position to open and hold any posts in this area. Moreover, this road was not of any strategic importance and it would be difficult to oust the Chinese from this region. In any case, the army was in no position to make that effort because of the limited resources available at Leh and of the non-existence of any road communication from Leh to these parts. The conclusion was that we should intensify our patrols and also try to open one post north of Phobrang at Tsogatsalu to check Chinese infiltration. It was suggested that from this advance post we should do more effective patrolling of the Lingzi Tang area in summer. One serious difficulty faced by us was that starting from Leh our patrols would have to cross three successive mountain ranges both towards Lingzi Tang and towards Karakoram and these passes did not open till July, so the patrol could be sent only in the second half of the year. The Chinese coming from Sinkiang into Lingzi Tang had no snow-clad passes to cross and could come to our territory, do the survey and go back before our patrol party could get into that area.

In the meantime, a report had been received from our Embassy in Peking about the completion of the Aksai Chin road. We had also earlier reported it. So in June, 1958, another meeting was held in the Ministry of External Affairs. This was attended by the CGS also. The Foreign Secretary maintained that neither

the Embassy report nor the Intelligence report conclusively proved that the Sinkiang-Western Tibet highway actually passed through our territory and no Indian party had actually traversed this route and so before any protest was lodged we should be sure of our ground. Hence it was decided that two patrol parties would be sent to traverse the Aksai Chin road and see it on the ground if it passed through Indian territory. One would be of the Army and the other of the ITB Police. The Army chose the known route from Hot Springs via Shamul Lungpa, Dehra Compass, Shinglung to Haji Langar to see the road from the northern end. The ITB police was left with either the route going through Lanak La into admittedly Chinese territory in Tibet or traverse an uncharted route direct east from Shamul Lungpa crossing two mountain ranges up to 18,000 feet high and land at Sarigh Jilganang Kol Lake. We chose the second route, as going via Lanak La it would be impossible to avoid the Chinese. We had foreseen a commitment of this type and had laid our stores the previous year at Hot Springs which we now moved to Shamul Lungpa. The army team was led by Lt. Iyengar. At Haji Langar this party encountered a Chinese patrol and was taken prisoner and removed to a fort in Sinkiang where the members were detained for two months till a protest was lodged. Though this team had a wireless set, it went out of order and so the team remained out of touch with headquarters from the very beginning. The ITB team was led by Karam Singh. He stuck to the route charted out on the map by us and reached Sarigh Jilganang Kol. Numerous heavy tyre marks were seen on the bank of the lake. From these and other marks, it was clear that the Chinese had halted at this place and that Chinese trucks were taking water from the lake. The party went further east crossing the Aksai Chin road up to Ladakh's boundary and planted our flag. It came back to the road and traversed it both north and south up to Amtogar lake. The party members saw a Chinese convoy but managed to hide themselves effectively and to take photographs of the convoy. Karam Singh took out one of the wooden pegs demarcating road miles in Chinese. This hazardous trip undertaken by Karam Singh confirmed without any doubt that the so-called Aksai Chin road

really cut acros s Indian territory from Haji Langar in the north to Amtogar in the south. The Government of India then made a protest to the Chinese Government about this road and also enquired if Lt. Iyengar was being held by them. Lt. Iyengar's party was then released but not at Haji Langar where it had been captured but at the Karakoram Pass which was the only point where there was no dispute about the lie of the frontier. The Chinese summarily rejected the protest about the road.

Earlier another patrol party of the IB going to the Karakoram Pass from Panamik had found signs of Chinese infiltration near Daulat Beg Oldi from the Qara Kash side. In December, 1958, we recommended to the Government that the checkposts should be pushed forward from Panamik to Murgo and Sultan Choksu from which two patrols should go regularly during the summer to the Karakoram pass. The posts at Murgo and Sultan Choksu should be made self-contained in transport by providing ponies. The post at Panamik had to be strengthened to sustain these two forward posts. The routes between Panamik and Murgo and between Shyok and Sultan Choksu should be improved, and huts should be constructed at convenient places to provide both living accommodation and kitchen space. We also argued that as this was an age-old route between Ladakh and Sinkiang, it was necessary that our patrols should go right up to the frontier so that no portion could be surreptitiously occupied by the Chinese on the ground that it was not under effective Indian occupation.

With regard to the Chinese infiltration in Lingzi Tang, Aksai Chin and Soda Plains, we recommended that the checkpost at Phobrang should be raised to a Company Headquarters and police posts should be opened at Tsogatsalu, Shamul Lungpa and Shinglung. We also recommended that the army should establish posts at Sarigh Jilganang Kol in the east and Palong Karpo in the north to be near the two ends of the Aksai Chin road. Our argument was that if we could not prevent the Chinese from using and further developing the Aksai Chin road, we could at least stop them from extending their road system further within our territory and the signs were that they were trying to connect Haji Langar with Shamul Lungpa and join it up with the projected

Lanak La-Shamul Lungpa road.

Our recommendation was discussed in January, 1959, at a meeting in the External Affairs Ministry with Gen. Thimayya, Chief of the Army Staff, present. Thimayya quite categorically stated that he did not consider that the Aksai Chin road was of any strategic importance nor was he willing to open any posts at Palong Karpo and Sarigh Jilganang Kol because he felt that small army posts would be of little use and in any case he had no means of maintaining them from his base at Leh. When I argued that the Chinese were using this road to bring re-inforcements to western Tibet whence they could threaten eastern Ladakh and so this road was of much security importance to us, Thimayya agreed but expressed his inability to do anything about it. The Foreign Secretary also agreed with the Army Chief and felt that posts at Shamul Lungpa, Shinglung, etc. would be of no use to stop Chinese infiltration. They might even provoke the Chinese into making further intrusions. I was informed by the Foreign Secretary after some days that the Prime Minister had approved of his views and no posts need be opened in this area. Against this decision I protested in February, 1959, and maintained that even if the Army could not open posts at Palong Karpo and Sarigh Jilgnang Kol the IB should be allowed to open posts there. I also argued that we should be allowed to open the posts at Tsogatsalu, Hot Springs, Shamul Lungpa and Shinglung. We would keep police at these places not for the purpose of fighting the Chinese but to prove our possession so that the Chinese might not claim that area and quietly occupy it. We also recommended that the posts at Palong Karpo and Sarigh Jilganang Kol could be fed by air and the other posts would be maintained by animal transport. After this I was absent from India for nearly five months due to some unavoidable reasons but shortly after receiving my note of February 16, the Prime Minister passed orders that whilst we should not open posts at Palong Karpo and Sarigh Jilganang Kol, because they would be too near the Aksai Chin road and might create tensions, the other posts recommended by me should be opened at Tsogatsalu, Hot Springs, Shamul Lungpa and Shinglung. Out of them only the Tsogatsalu and Hot Springs

posts could be opened next October but before the others could be opened the Chinese came in and occupied the area.

The question may be legitimately asked why, when so much information about this road was available year after year, did the Government of India not lodge a protest with the Chinese or take any steps to prevent its construction. The reason for this inaction has been explained by both Mankekar in his book, *The Guilty Men of 1962*, and Khera in *India's Defence Problem*. The Army Headquarters knew that they were in no position to prevent the Chinese from constructing this road across Aksai Chin. According to them it was physically impossible for them even to maintain posts at these places in the prevailing state of communication from Leh. Even the road from Srinagar to Leh was subject to interruptions for seven months in the year. Thimayya knew the strength and the capability of the Chinese army. He had seen them at close quarters in Korea where they had very nearly defeated the Americans. He knew that the Indian army in those days was in no position to engage the Chinese in a big war. He was expressing this view even as late as 1962. And at such a remote place, where there was no means of sustaining the force, his troops would have suffered severe reverses at the very outset and he would be in no position to retrieve the situation. He was not to be lured into an area where he was in no position to defend himself. So he tried to play down the importance of the road and throw doubts on Intelligence reports about its existence. If he admitted its importance from the security point of view, he might have been forced by Indian public opinion to engage in an unequal fight, the adverse result of which he clearly foresaw. The attitude of the External Affairs Ministry was that this part of the territory was useless to India. Even if the Chinese did not encroach into it, India could not make any use of it. The boundary had not been demarcated and had been shifted more than once by the British. There was an old silk route which was a sort of an international route. The Chinese had only improved it. It would be pointless to pick up quarrels over issues in which India had no means of enforcing her claims. These were all valid arguments and their validity seems to be more acceptable to the

people at large and even the Opposition than it was in those days. The Prime Minister was no doubt inhibited by the same considerations and his knowledge about the weakness of his Army *vis-a-vis* the Chinese Army and its inability those days to effectively prevent Chinese encroachment in our territory. Aksai Chin was the only part of our territory in which so far the Chinese had been able to make an entry. Ousting them from this area, he knew, was well-nigh impossible. So he was even willing to allow the Chinese the use of this road for civilian purposes. In retrospect, I feel, I made a serious mistake in not taking up the question of this road with the Prime Minister directly. Not being responsible for any action, we could take a more objective view of the dangers that confronted us as ours was the only organisation which was working in those areas. We naturally had a better comprehension than others of the threat which this road posed. My talk would have induced the Prime Minister to order a high-level study of the implications of this road and this would have resulted in our taking more vigorous preventive measures to stop the further extensive encroachments which occurred in the next few years.

All through these years the Chinese continued their road construction programme in all parts of Tibet relentlessly—engaging large numbers of Tibetans as labourers and treating them worse than slaves. By the end of 1958 the Chinese had completed the following arterial highways linking China with Tibet from north-east, east and west. The most important was the Sining (rail-head)-Gormo-Nagchuka-Zamsar-Lhasa road and this carried most of the heavy traffic and practically all the patrol. Another road starting from Sining led to Nagchuka and Lhasa via Jyekundo and Chamdo. From the Chengtu side on the east a road led to Kanting and then connected with Chamdo via Kantse. From Kanting another road took off in a westerly direction and going via Markhang, Drokhang, Shugden, Chomo Dzong and Gianda terminated at Lhasa. Thus Lhasa was connected with China from the north-east and the east. From Lhasa a highway to the west passed through Shighatse, Lhatse, Saka, Tradom and Parkha and terminated at Gartok where it met the Sinkiang-western Tibet highway passing through Aksai Chin. A direct route was also

built from Nagchuka along the northern steppes to Thokjalung and ending at Tashigong where it met the Gartok-Sinkiang highway. A road parallel to the Nepal border was constructed starting at Gyantse and passing through Khamba, Sekhar Dzong, Tingri, Dzongka Dzong and meeting the Lhasa-Gartok highway at Tradom. Besides these arterial roads, numerous roads were constructed towards India, Sikkim and Nepal borders, the more important of which were Drowa to Rima, Gyantse to Phari, Parkha to Taklakot and Gartok to Tholingmath. A road ran parallel to the south bank of the Tsangpo and from this radiated roads to Tsona and Lhuntze on the NEFA border and Lakhang Dzong on the Bhutan border. China had therefore carefully laid out both arterial and radial roads in Tibet and was no longer dependent on getting supplies from India to maintain her army in Tibet. We regularly reported to the Government and to the Army Headquarters this massive road-building programme in Tibet. It was the realisation of the danger that these roads posed that led the Government to set up a border roads organisation to take up the expeditious construction of roads in our border areas.

I have explained in an earlier chapter that whereas it was an extremely difficult engineering job to build even 10 miles of roads in NEFA and Sikkim and even in UP, and the roads often had to pass over high snow-clad mountain ranges in Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh, China was sitting pretty on a high plateau (roof of the world) where the only effort she required in even laying down hundreds of miles of road was to mark out the direction by flags or pieces of stones on both sides. Only an occasional digging or filling or blasting had to be done. The surface was generally so hard that it could take heavy military traffic without any deterioration and required no metalling or tarring. Compared to this, in the soft hillsides of NEFA even the best road just melted away and disappeared during the rains. No means had till then been found of circumventing the deep layer of snow on all the passes which stopped communication between Kashmir and Ladakh for the better part of the year. That our frontier roads were not ready by the time the conflict with China started is no reflection on our road builders. Ours was an incomparably

more difficult task than what the Chinese faced.

Simultaneously with developing road communication to our frontier areas, China also extended her administrative control in such areas like Pemako, Chimdru, Migytun and Tsona which they had previously left uncontrolled except by sending occasional parties. Thus, by the end of 1958, China's control over Tibet was complete. At this time China's economic condition was also good and the big leap forward was making steady progress and there were no marked shortages. Even industrial output had rapidly increased. China did not any longer require any international support and could stand on her own. Nor was she anxious any longer to get into the United Nations. She would eventually get there. But a period of outlawry suited her designs. She could follow her plans without any inhibitions. She did not care for others' opinions. Any method was right which furthered her designs. Friendship, promises, *Panchsheel* and treaties could all be cast aside if they came in the way.

14 The Tibetan Revolt

WHEN IN FEBRUARY 1957 the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet after his visit to India which had commenced the previous November, he entered a country which was seething with discontent and resentment against the Chinese. This was the reason why the Chinese had sent messages to him whilst in India to hurry back to Tibet.

The seeds of this trouble had been sown as early as 1956 in the Kham and Amdo areas. The Khampas, the residents of the Kham province, were ardent Buddhists but born soldiers and they had always maintained an autonomy of their own though professing allegiance to the Dalai Lama. The residents of the Amdo province were the Amdoas and, though they were not so warlike as the Khampas, they were also virile and freedom loving. (Incidentally the Dalai Lama is from the Amdo area). The Amdoas were also ardent Buddhists and even in the best of times owed only nominal allegiance to the temporal authority of the Dalai Lama. The Headquarters of the Kham area is Chamdo. This is the area which had been claimed as a part of Inner Tibet by the Chinese and had been first invaded in October, 1950, and it was near Chamdo that the Tibetan army had been defeated. The Chinese took these areas away from the Dalai Lama's control and placed them under the Chamdo Liberation Committee. After that, while the Chinese were building their road communication through the Kham and Amdo areas, they showed a conciliatory attitude towards the local inhabitants and even tried to take advantage of their traditional hostility against the U and Tsang people.

By 1956 the Chinese had completed their occupation of Central Tibet and had passed on to the frontiers of India and Nepal and, therefore, there was no longer any need for continuing the soft attitude towards the Khampas and the Amdoas. They then tried to

introduce land reforms and reduce the power of the monasteries and in the name of these reforms they dispossessed and drove away some landlords and interfered with the working of the monasteries. The Khampas had seen the adverse result of these land reforms in the adjoining Chinese province of Sikang and so there was resistance from the people. The Chinese then wanted the Khampas to lay down their arms which to the Khampas were as dear as their lives. This demand alarmed the Khampas and they started showing open resistance to any move to disarm them. The Chinese then called a meeting of three hundred village leaders and enquired from them whether land reforms should be introduced immediately or deferred. The overwhelming majority gave their opinion either in favour of deferring the reforms for a long period or not introducing them at all. After some time the Chinese summoned the leaders again for a further meeting. This time the meeting was held in a fort where the leaders were kept as virtual prisoners for over a fortnight whilst they were being continually pressurised to agree to the early introduction of land reforms. The Chinese managed to extort some form of consent from the leaders by this pressure. Then they wanted to keep these leaders for some days more to indoctrinate them politically and in order to show their good faith they relaxed the security measures. That was an opportunity which these hapless leaders would not miss and the entire three hundred disappeared one night with their arms and took to the hills. This was the beginning of the great Khampa rebellion which the Chinese took nearly four years to suppress.

As the Chinese started putting more pressure on the Khampa and the Amdo areas, more and more people joined the guerrillas who raided Chinese depots, attacked camps and disrupted communications. The Chinese, on their part, resorted to violent reprisals. Arrests, deportations and shootings were done mercilessly. Monasteries were bombed and monks were driven out and humiliated or executed. But all this coercion, instead of subduing the rebels, increased their anger and determination further.

The Dalai Lama and his Kashag had heard vague rumours of trouble in the Kham region but, because the area was no longer

under their administrative control, they had no clear idea about what was happening and they had not realised the extent of trouble that had taken place till one day, in a public meeting at Lhasa, without warning the Kashag, the Chinese themselves announced the outbreak of rebellion in eastern Tibet and their determination to crush it. Thereafter they started blaming the Tibetan Government for fomenting the trouble, though even at the best of times the Kashag had exercised little influence in the Kham and the Amdo regions and now these had been removed from its control. The Chinese then demanded that the Tibetan army should be sent to quell the rebellion. This was, however, resisted on the ground that the employment of Tibetan troops against the Khampas would be extremely unwise and, in the existing state of relations, it could not be ensured that the Tibetan army would not join the rebellion. Ultimately the Dalai Lama sent a mission to pacify the Khampas. The mission produced only a palliative effect and things quietened for some time. But as soon as the Chinese started taking action against the erstwhile rebels and seizing their arms the trouble broke out again with the same intensity as before. The fact that the Khampas and the Amdoas were fighting for their liberty and religion against their oppressors—the Chinese—who were also oppressing the Tibetans naturally incensed the people of U and Tsang provinces also and particularly the people of Lhasa and meetings were held and open resentment expressed against the methods used by the Chinese in suppressing the discontent in the east.

This was more or less the situation when the Dalai Lama came to India in November, 1956. During his absence, the Chinese started a drive to suppress the rebellion as a result of which hundreds of Khampas left their homes and started migrating towards the west and to Lhasa. Naturally they were well received by the Lhasa population who sheltered and fed them. This was not to the liking of the Chinese. When, therefore, the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa in February, 1957, he found that the Lhasa population had swelled considerably due to the arrival of these refugees.

It is true that in February, 1957, Mao Tse-tung announced that

land reforms would not be introduced in Tibet for at least five years. Whether this was done as a result of Pandit Nehru's intervention with Chou En-lai or in order to pacify the Khampas and the Amdoas is a debatable point. The attitude of the Chinese Military Commanders also became noticeably conciliatory for a time. To make a show some troops were also taken out of Lhasa. But these steps did not in any way pacify the Tibetans, whose suspicion had been thoroughly roused by now and they suspected that every move of the Chinese was calculated to be a further noose round their necks.

On his return from India, the Dalai Lama also showed some independence and made open utterances that the Chinese were not their masters and that Tibetan autonomy had been guaranteed and also took a few steps to achieve that autonomy. The Chinese did not like this though the Dalai Lama's utterances and actions were strictly within the terms of the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951. But they bided their time as they were not yet ready to force events in Tibet.

By the middle of 1958, the Chinese had completed their hold on all parts of Tibet and their arterial roads from China and Sinkiang were ready and even radial roads had been completed to the borders of India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. Their attitude then suddenly changed. They probably felt that there was no need any longer of showing any consideration for Tibetan feelings. So they tried to adopt steam-roller tactics to break all forms of Tibetan resistance. This further increased Tibetan resentment and almost forced them to a state of open revolt.

The Dalai Lama had, whilst in India, invited Prime Minister Nehru to visit Tibet and the latter had accepted the invitation and this had also been agreed to by Chou En-lai. So the Dalai Lama was hoping that during Pandit Nehru's visit the Chinese Prime Minister would also come to Lhasa and they together could then solve some of the problems which were confronting him since his return from India. Also their visit might pacify the Khampas. But in July, 1958, the Chinese took the plea that it would be too dangerous for Pandit Nehru to visit Lhasa because of the presence of rebels in and around the city and they

would not be able to guarantee his safety. This could not be true because no Tibetan would harm Pandit Nehru, the head of a friendly country like India, who had shown so much hospitality to the Dalai Lama only a few months earlier and had restored his prestige. The Chinese obviously were reluctant to let Pandit Nehru see the unsettled internal conditions of Tibet nor were they willing to accept his mediation a second time. They were also afraid that there might be large demonstrations against them in Lhasa and other places through which Pandit Nehru would pass.

The refusal of the Chinese to allow Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to visit Lhasa greatly disappointed the people of Tibet. They saw that Pandit Nehru went through Phari into Bhutan and again returned that way and yet they were denied the pleasure of honouring this great world statesman. They had hoped that on seeing the conditions of utter discontent and almost open revolt then prevalent in this country, he might be able to persuade the Chinese Prime Minister to show more moderation in the policy which the Chinese were following in Tibet. But their hopes remained unfulfilled and this aroused their anger against the Chinese further and made it uncontrollable. They realised that the Chinese would not allow any outside interference in Tibet and so the Tibetans had only two alternatives left. They had either to surrender meekly to the Chinese and be obliterated as an independent nation or revolt against them and make a last desperate bid to throw them out to regain their independence. Circumstances forced them to adopt the latter path.

In the meantime, the Chinese put more pressure in the Kham and the Amdo areas and this drove more refugees to Lhasa whose population by the month of November, 1958, had doubled. Though this influx was causing much economic distress in Lhasa, yet the old time animosity between the Tibetans and the Khampas was forgotten and they had become friends in adversity. So the Lhasa people willingly put up with all the difficulties and shared their accommodation and food supplies with the refugees. The Chinese then started a house-to-house census of the Khampa refugees. This alarmed the Khampas further and, under the

instructions of their leader, Adruk Gompo Tashi, they left Lhasa in batches, crossed the Tsangpo river, cleared a large area of Chinese troops, and thereafter commanded practically the entire area south of Tsangpo up to the NEFA frontier. They formed a Voluntary National Defence Army and established their headquarters at Drigu. There were numerous engagements between the Chinese troops and the guerrillas all over this region and the latter often surprised Chinese convoys and outposts. There were skirmishes in the neighbourhood of Lhasa also. Though the Chinese adopted very severe measures, they did not succeed in subduing the Khampas. The Chinese then accused the Tibetans of direct complicity with the rebels, and named a large number of residents of Lhasa whom they wanted to be arrested and surrendered to the Chinese. So these persons also disappeared from Lhasa and joined the Khampa rebels cementing in blood the bond of unity between the Tibetans, the Khampas and the Amdoas.

In October, 1958, the Chinese started a new propaganda against the Buddhist religion and issued pamphlets depicting even Lord Buddha as a reactionary. The Dalai Lama took strong objection to this, on which some of the pamphlets were withdrawn from circulation. But the Tibetans felt further humiliated at this denigration of Lord Buddha. Unable to control the rebellion by their own forces, the Chinese again asked the Dalai Lama to deploy the Tibetan army against the rebels; but this the Tibetan Government refused to do. Instead another mission of four officers was sent by the Kashag with a promise from the Chinese that if the rebels laid down their arms the Chinese would not take severe action against them. But the mission never returned as the members joined the guerrillas. It was in this state of strife, turmoil, uncertainty and open rebellion that the year 1958 ended and 1959 was ushered in bringing with it the most serious happenings in Tibet in two thousand years.

It is a fact that the extent of this discontent and trouble prevalent in Tibet over such a long period was not fully realised in India. As explained earlier, even the Tibetan Cabinet was itself ignorant for a long time about what was happening in the Kham

and the Amdo areas which were under the Chamdo Liberation Committee and not under the Dalai Lama. It was only when the Chinese themselves announced the outbreak of rebellion in the eastern areas that the Tibetan Cabinet came to realise its real significance. In his book, *My Land and My People*, the Dalai Lama has explained how, as an ardent follower of the Buddha, he was opposed to violence of any kind. So his first attempt had been to cool down the passions of rebel Khampas and Amdoas. He was opposed in principle to the Khampas committing violence against the Chinese and, even as a matter of expediency, he considered that such violence would only result in reprisals which might break the Tibetan spirit for a long time to come. At the same time he fully realised that the rebels were fighting for the cause of their religion and the independence of the country, subjects which were dear to the Dalai Lama's heart also. Therefore he could not agree to the Chinese using strong measures against them. The Chinese were, of course, doing it all the same, but this was without his consent and he was helpless. For this reason the Kashag had been trying to play down the extent of Tibetan unrest and trouble all this time.

Amongst the refugee Tibetans and exiled members of the Dalai Lama's cabinet in Kalimpong there was also some misgiving. These persons had mostly come out before the Khampa trouble had begun. There was traditional hostility between the Tibetans and the Khampas and, therefore, these Tibetans would not accept that the Khampa rebellion was anything but local trouble and that the Khampas were actually fighting for the sake of their religion and the Dalai Lama. Hence they also discounted many of the stories which filtered through. They were uncertain about the attitude of the Government of India and were afraid that they themselves might be accused of complicity and so they also kept quiet. But the main reason was that they also did not properly grasp all that was going on in Tibet.

As the movements of our consul in Lhasa were restricted he did not know what was happening in the Kham area and had only heard rumours of trouble. Our own sources had, of cource, reported about the trouble in eastern Tibet. The Dalai Lama

had also mentioned the prevailing state of discontent to Pandit Nehru and the latter had talked to Chou En-lai about it. The Chinese Prime Minister had agreed to look into it. Yet the magnitude and the strength of the Khampa resistance had not been fully comprehended by us.

From the beginning of 1959, the Chinese started making serious and entirely unfounded accusations against the Tibetan Government of siding with the rebels and not taking enough action against them though this was an admission of their own failure, because the Kham and the Amdo areas were not under the Dalai Lama's control. The Dalai Lama was in an unenviable position. He was being accused by the Chinese of siding with the rebels and by the latter of being subservient to the Chinese. The Chinese then started bringing in more troops into Tibet and by the end of February, 1959, nearly two hundred thousand troops had been massed.

In the meantime, information came to Lhasa of news having been circulated in Peking that the Dalai Lama had been invited to visit Peking to attend the National Assembly, though no such invitation had come. The Tibetans suspected that on this excuse the Chinese would take the Dalai Lama away and keep him as a hostage indefinitely. This agitated them further. After that events moved fast. In the beginning of February the Chinese Military Headquarters at Lhasa invited the Dalai Lama for a theatrical show in their campus, but the Dalai Lama put it off till after the conclusion of the annual Monlan Festival and his own religious examination. When these were finished and the invitation was repeated, the Dalai Lama agreed to attend the performance on March 10. But on March 9 the Chinese sent for the Head of the Dalai Lama's bodyguard and made a condition that the Dalai Lama would have to come alone, and that no Tibetan troops would cross the stone bridge which marked the boundary of the military camp. It was peculiar that such conditions would be made as the Chinese themselves had invited the Dalai Lama for the show. The best explanation that can be given is that the Chinese were apprehensive that if a large number of Tibetan troops and other Tibetans came into the military area there might be

clashes between the Chinese troops and the Tibetans. The worst is that they wanted to lure the Dalai Lama into their camp and then hold him as a refugee from the rebels and fly him out to Peking declaring that he had gone out of his own accord. Actually Minister Ngapo Shapé, who was living in the Chinese camp those days, did advise the Dalai Lama two days later to take shelter in the Chinese military camp.

Whatever might be the reason, the news that the Chinese were insisting on the Dalai Lama to go to the Chinese camp alone caused serious apprehensions in the minds of the people of Lhasa, and on the morning of March 10 crowds started streaming into the areas surrounding Norbu Linka where the Dalai Lama was staying. By mid-day nearly 10,000 Tibetans had collected there. Some stray acts of violence were committed when the crowd detected some suspected quislings. The crowd was insistent that the Dalai Lama should not go to the Chinese military camp. Despite best efforts by the Cabinet officials the crowd could not be pacified. They were shouting slogans: "The Chinese must go," "Leave Tibet to the Tibetans," etc. Ultimately, the Dalai Lama had to make a promise that he would not go to the Chinese camp. He sent three Ministers to explain the situation to the Chinese Military Headquarters where they had a very rough time facing the Chinese General. They were told bluntly that the Chinese Government had been tolerating all the defiance so far but, as this was a state of rebellion, they would now act and threatened the Ministers to be prepared for the consequences. From March 11 to 16 the tension went on mounting. People formed voluntary squads to protect the Dalai Lama. They asked for supplies of arms, which the Dalai Lama refused. In spite of repeated exhortations by the members of the Cabinet, the crowd would not disperse and went on increasing. They kept a day and night vigil on the Norbu Linka to prevent the Dalai Lama from coming out. On the 16th, information was received that the Chinese had moved into Lhasa some artillery from outside and the Tibetans then suspected that the Chinese were preparing to bombard Lhasa. As if to lend further confirmation to this suspicion two explosions did take place the next day just outside the walls of Norbu

Linka. The suspicion mounted that this was a warning that the Chinese would now bombard the palace.

On the evening of March 17, the Dalai Lama with some members of his family, members of the Cabinet and a few bodyguards left Norbu Linka in batches in disguise. Their aim was to cross the river Kyi Chu on the southern outskirts of Lhasa quickly. This they managed to do without any difficulty. On the other bank some Khampa soldiers took charge of them. The party made rapid progress and next evening crossed the Tsangpo river and came into the comparative safety of the rebel-held territory. The Dalai Lama has given a vivid description of this flight. His original intention was to come into an area in Tibet out of Chinese reach and declare the formation of a new temporary government. This was done at Lhuntze Dzong but, finding that it was not safe to stay there, he ultimately decided to take shelter in India. On March 31, he ultimately succeeded in crossing the Indian frontier near Khinzemane.

In the meantime, there was utter confusion in Tibet, and Lhasa in particular. The fact that the Dalai Lama had escaped was not yet known to the public, but his restraining hand was no longer there and so the crowds became uncontrollable. On the 20th the Chinese started bombarding Norbu Linka, Potala and various places of resistance in Lhasa. Peking Radio announced the outbreak of rebellion and the action taken to suppress it. After four days of desperate fighting, with at least 4,000 Tibetans killed and another 4,000 taken prisoners, the peace of the grave was enforced in Lhasa.

The Dalai Lama was granted asylum in India by the Indian Government. He came to Tezpur where he made a statement to the effect that he had voluntarily left Tibet, but the Chinese alleged that he had been forced to make this statement by the Indian Government. From Tezpur the Dalai Lama came to Mussoorie where he was temporarily accommodated. Here Pandit Nehru met him. In a press conference held at Mussoorie, the Dalai Lama stated that the three letters which he had written in Lhasa to the Chinese Commander during the period from March 10 to 15 were for the purpose of gaining time and too much

should not be read into the words used. He further reiterated that he had left Tibet voluntarily and all statements issued by him thereafter were his own. Replying to a question, he claimed that wherever the Dalai Lama accompanied by his Cabinet stayed, the people of Tibet recognised them as the Government of Tibet.

The Dalai Lama's disappearance from Tibet gave the Chinese the opportunity to raze Tibet to the ground which they had been seeking for the previous eight years. After the bloody suppression of the revolt in Lhasa, the Chinese troops, whose numbers then were about two hundred thousand, went into action first in the area south of Lhasa up to the Tsangpo and cleared the area of guerrillas. Then they conducted campaigns in the hilly areas south of Tsangpo and gradually forced the rebels into more inaccessible hills or to flee into India. By the end of May the Chinese claimed that the guerrillas had been exterminated and many towns and forts had been captured. Only token resistance in some parts remained.

The Chinese also took this opportunity to destroy the last vestiges of the Tibetan Government whose roots went deep into the past and whose authority they had tried to erode through the Preparatory Committee. The Chinese now totally abolished it and set up a Military dictatorship. A few Tibetan officials, nobles and monks remained to collaborate till they could also find the opportunity to run away. The Panchen Lama was appointed to take the Dalai Lama's place as the titular head of the Government. Autonomy was again promised and so also land reforms.

But freedom of movement was totally restricted throughout Tibet. Every Tibetan had to carry an identity card which had to be shown on entering or leaving any town or village. Lhasa was surrounded by military posts on all sides and there were pickets at key points throughout the city. Even normal social intercourse was stopped. In all important towns and villages Chinese troops were billeted in the houses of the landlords. Chinese troops were deployed on all the passes leading to India and Nepal to stop fleeing refugees and prevent anyone coming into Tibet. Trade and communication with India were thus entirely disrupted. Even pilgrimage to Kailash and Mansarovar was stopped.

The Chinese were determined to uproot religion in Tibet and all religious institutions were suppressed. The great monasteries of Tibet were attacked and looted and unspeakable sacrileges were committed. Monks, old and young, were arrested, beaten and publicly humiliated. Their income was stopped and no one could give them even offerings and thus they were starved. Many monks were just driven out, many were beaten to death and many committed suicide. All properties in the monasteries, including sacred images and books, were destroyed or removed.

The Chinese dealt with the population of Lhasa with a heavy hand. All people were organised for forced labour. Few able-bodied laymen were left; but women, young and old, including ladies of noble families, together with the evicted monks, were made to work day and night on road-building and similar tasks. They had no alternative as their lives depended on the rations which the Chinese issued, inadequate though they were. Hundreds died due to exhaustion or were beaten to death.

The Chinese also tried to bring about drastic changes in land relations by abolishing all estates. The holdings of those landlords who had migrated to India were confiscated. Others were resumed. A nominal distribution of land to the peasantry was made. The Chinese then started introducing the commune system. Much land was arbitrarily taken over and given to their own nationals for cultivation. The horrors perpetrated have been well described in the report of the International Jurists who have held that the Chinese committed systematic genocide in Tibet.

When ultimately the news of these terrible happenings in Tibet and the Dalai Lama's flight to India came to be known in this country, there was widespread sympathy from all sections of the people and very strong reaction. Leaders of all political parties except the Communist Party condemned the Chinese action and even criticised the Government of India for letting down peaceful Tibet and allowing it to be ravaged by the oppressive Chinese. The reactions throughout the world were equally strong. An Italian paper said, "And so the world stands powerless before the crushing of the heroic Tibetan people without realising that once again the cause of freedom is in jeopardy". A manifesto by some

distinguished Frenchmen published in the Paris newspaper *Le Monde* demanded that the United Nations condemn the Peking Government for the flagrant violation of the universal declaration of human rights and invited the French Government to join in morally supporting the Dalai Lama in exile and the Tibetan people in their resistance to the invaders. Many newspapers in South-East Asian countries also wrote in similar terms.

The Indian newspapers were vehement in their condemnation of China's brazen-faced aggression in Tibet and were critical of the Government of India for soft-pedalling the issue. Amongst the Indian leaders, Jai Prakash Narayan and Acharya Kripalani were the most forthright. Jai Prakash Narayan said, "We cannot physically prevent the Chinese from annexing Tibet, but we can at least put on record a clear verdict that aggression has been committed and the freedom of a weak nation has been snuffed out by a powerful neighbour. In Tibet, we see at this moment the working of a new imperialism which is far more dangerous than the old because it marches under the banner of a so-called revolutionary ideology. Tibet may be a theocratic State rather than a secular State and backward economically and socially, but no nation has the right to impose progress, whatever that may mean, upon another nation." Acharya Kripalani, at a public meeting, calling the uprising in Tibet a national revolt, said, "If we fail to recognise the true nature of the struggle, we shall stand condemned before the impartial opinion of the world." He continued: that "India must freely state her opinion on this issue without any inhibition. Our people would hardly give credit to our pious assertion of impartiality and justice if we did not raise our voice when the independent existence of a small and a peaceful nation was threatened by an intoxicated power." U.N. Dhebar said that China would be branded an imperialist if she did not come to an agreement with Tibet. Ashoka Mehta condemned the Chinese action in strong terms. Purshottamdas Tricumdas took the initiative to form the International Commission of Jurists whose report, strongly accusing China of perpetrating genocide in Tibet, is a public document.

In his statement in the Lok Sabha on April 27, 1959, Pandit

Nehru referred to this strong and widespread reaction in India. He said that this reaction was not essentially political, but was largely one of sympathy based on sentiment and humanitarian reasons and also on a certain feeling of kinship with the Tibetan people derived from long established religious and cultural contacts. This was an instinctive reaction. He said that when there were such reactions in India one could easily understand what would be the strength of the reaction in Tibet itself, and remarked that such reactions could not be dealt with by political methods alone, much less by military methods. He reiterated that India had no desire to interfere in Tibet; on the other hand, she had every desire to maintain friendship with China. But at the same time India had every sympathy for the people of Tibet, and the people of India were greatly distressed at their helpless plight. He hoped that the Chinese in their wisdom would not use their great strength against the Tibetans, but would win them over through friendly cooperation in accordance with the assurances that they had given about the autonomy of Tibet. When in the Rajya Sabha, on May 4, a Communist member questioned the propriety of the grant of asylum to the Dalai Lama, arguing that it was a breach of the *Panchsheel*, Pandit Nehru reacted strongly and said that India had all along striven to stand by these principles and would continue to stand by them. So far as the grant of asylum to the Dalai Lama was concerned, as a sovereign country India had every right to do so and nobody else could be a judge of that excepting the Indian people and claimed that this action was approved of by hundreds of millions of the Indian people, who would have been angry if this asylum had been denied. Pandit Nehru also referred to the hundreds of Tibetans who had escaped into India and said that they would also be given asylum in this country. Ridiculing the Chinese allegation that the revolt in Tibet was confined to the "upper strata reactionary clique", Pandit Nehru referred to these refugees, the vast majority of whom were ordinary labourers, businessmen, cultivators, artisans, and said that it would be quite incorrect to say that this revolt was brought about only by a few. He also strongly repudiated the charge made by the New China News Agency that Kalimpong had been

used as the commanding base for this rebellion, and mentioned that the revolt had really started in 1956 in the Kham region, and wondered how Kalimpong could have any connection with that.

When the Tibetan issue came to the United Nations, the General Assembly passed a resolution on October 21, 1959, calling for respect for the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people and for their distinctive cultural and religious life.

There was an endless stream of refugees. Initially most of them followed the route taken by the Dalai Lama; but later they spilled through all passes into NEFA, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh. Refugees also poured into Bhutan and Nepal, a majority of whom ultimately found their way into India. The magnificent effort put up by the Government of India to receive the refugees, look after them, provide them with employment and finally rehabilitate them, has received the highest praise not only from the Dalai Lama but the world over. One hears a lot of publicity about some foreign countries aiding some of the Tibetan refugees, but it should be realised that over 95 per cent of the expense over Tibetan refugees has been willingly and ungrudgingly borne by the Government and the people of India and except a handful, who have gone to foreign countries, practically all the refugees have been settled in India. And the world realises that in giving asylum to the Dalai Lama and the refugees, India endangered her own security and has suffered many political, military and economic difficulties. The Dalai Lama himself has openly praised this unstinted and unselfish assistance given by India. If the bonds of cultural and religious ties between the Indians and the Tibetans have been of very long duration, there is no doubt that they have been greatly strengthened by the unstinted moral sympathy and material assistance which the people of India have extended to these hapless refugees from Tibet.

Some people have questioned the wisdom of India giving asylum to the Dalai Lama and to the thousands of Tibetans who followed him into India. The political justification of this was given by Pandit Nehru in his statement in Parliament on May 4, 1959. But this was justified also from India's own security point

of view, particularly the security of its northern frontier regions and Ladakh. It should be remembered that large areas in the northern regions of India are inhabited by Buddhists, though they are not Tibetans. The people of the northern parts of Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal are also Buddhists. The people of Ladakh are also Buddhists and there is much in common between the Ladakhis and the Tibetans. The Mompas of the Tawang subdivision in NEFA are Buddhists and there are Buddhist pockets at other places also, though generally the rest of the tribals are animists and have more in common with India than with Tibet. But they had never been properly assimilated in the life stream of Indian society and could, therefore, be subverted.

With such a lot of heterogeneous population in the northern regions, particularly the large numbers professing the Buddhist faith, what happened in Tibet was of great consequence to these areas. Buddhism was the official religion in Tibet, and all the monasteries that existed in these northern regions of India owed allegiance to one or other of the big monasteries in Tibet. If the Chinese treated the Tibetans well, gave them real autonomy, introduced popular reforms and advanced the country peacefully and progressively towards prosperity, and did not in any way denigrate the Tibetan personality, this would create a great impact on the minds of the Buddhist population in our northern areas as well as in Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal. On the other hand, if the Chinese ill-treated the Tibetans, reduced them to the position of slaves and, in the name of land reforms and progress, suppressed all that was good in Tibetan culture and society and also destroyed their religion, this would create revulsion in the minds of our Buddhist population against the Chinese. If the Chinese had followed the first course, they would have gained the admiration and sympathy of the Buddhist population of India, Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal and could have more effectively subverted them against India and won them over. But this was not the Chinese line. They were never serious about granting autonomy to Tibet. They had learnt from history that whenever Tibet was strong it had thrown off the shackles of Chinese imperialism and, therefore, they were out to destroy Tibet as a separate entity

altogether and proceeded systematically to do so.

What effect did this produce on our Buddhist population? They saw that their religion was being destroyed systematically in Tibet; the monasteries to which they owed allegiance were desecrated, defiled and looted; old abbots, lamas and monks, for whom they had great reverence and under whom they had studied Buddhist scriptures, were being killed, dishonoured, humiliated and even forced to break their vows; the Dalai Lama, for whom there was universal respect, had to flee Tibet; and thousands of Tibetans, men, women and children of all classes, had also to leave Tibet in utter distress to seek their salvation in India. If in such circumstances India had closed her doors to the Dalai Lama and these Tibetans, there would have been great dismay amongst our Buddhist population and the Government of India would have lost their entire sympathy. On the other hand, the very presence of the Dalai Lama in India gave them a focal point and their eyes no longer turned to Tibet for inspiration and guidance but rested within the borders of India itself. They saw with their own eyes the terrible plight and misery of thousands of these refugees and heard stories of inhuman atrocities committed by the Chinese. All the propaganda put out by the Chinese of their having introduced reforms in Tibet, of its growing prosperity and of the Tibetans enjoying complete liberty and autonomy could cut no ice with the Indian Buddhist population who saw the deplorable results of the Chinese action with their own eyes. The reception given to the Dalai Lama by the Government of India and the treatment given to the refugees who had to flee their homes and the expenses incurred in spite of the security dangers involved served to convince the people of the northern regions as to who their real friends were. Hence, the presence of the Dalai Lama and thousands of refugees in India is of the greatest security value to India by keeping the population of nearly one hundred thousand square miles of the northern areas plus Ladakh as well as the population of the northern parts of Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal loyal to their respective governments and immune to the tall and false claims of Chinese propaganda.

I remember, in 1960, after Chou En-lai's visit, when India-

China relations had touched a low point, Pandit Pant one day talked to me at length about the wisdom of India sheltering the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan refugees, though thereby India had incurred strong Chinese animosity. He must have thought over the problem himself and come to his own conclusions; but as was the practice with him, he asked me to give my own views, and I used the arguments mentioned above and fully supported the Government's action. Pandit Pant agreed that this was the correct reasoning and enquired from me whether I had ever had a discussion on this subject with Pandit Nehru who was believed to be under considerable pressure from certain quarters to revise his stand *vis-a-vis* the Dalai Lama and the refugees. On my reply in the negative, he asked me to raise this topic at my next meeting with the Prime Minister. This I did within a few days and found that Pandit Nehru had no doubts about the correctness of India's stand in this matter even though the Chinese had openly denounced India for siding with the Tibetan rebels and had even held out open threats. He said that India was morally pledged to protect Tibetan autonomy, its culture and religion and to save its personality, but in the circumstances in which India was placed in the early fifties she could not do anything militarily to save Tibet from China. He had used his influence with the Chinese Premier to bring about some moderation in Chinese behaviour in Tibet and had temporarily succeeded. He would have liked the Dalai Lama to have stayed on in Lhasa, because in his absence all vestiges of Tibetan autonomy would disappear and the Chinese would even blot out Tibetan culture and religion. It was unfortunate that circumstances had taken such a shape as to force the Dalai Lama to come away. After talking to the latter, he was convinced that things had developed in such a way that the Dalai Lama could not have remained in Tibet any longer with honour and, even if he had stayed on, he would have been a virtual prisoner and would not have been able to prevent Tibet's destruction. In such circumstances, if India had refused to give shelter to the Dalai Lama and had sent him back to Tibet, it would be going against all canons of equity and international norms and it would also be the end of India's profession of friendship with the Tibe-

tan people. He stressed that the Government of India's attitude to the Dalai Lama and also the refugees had brought about a great deal of stability in the border regions, the people of which, from the reports he had received, had earlier been swayed considerably by Chinese promises in Tibet but had now realised that these were all false. This has served to integrate them more fully with the Indian population.

I am mentioning this because, besides the communists, there are still some people in India—and some of them in quite high positions—who consider that India did not act wisely in giving shelter to the Dalai Lama. To them probably the integration of these border regions with India was not particularly important, and to gain Chinese friendship they might have even liked to come to a compromise over these areas. But this would have only whetted the Chinese imperialist appetite. After swallowing these areas, the Chinese would have opened their mouth for more and then there would be no defences left, either moral or physical, to protect the rest of the country. By following this policy, which was right by all legal and moral standards, we have created conditions of stability in the frontier regions and the people of these areas will, without any doubt, form the bulwark of our defence against the Chinese.

15 Threat to India's Integrity

CHINA WAS FURIOUS. The columns of the Chinese official newspapers, *Takung Pao* and *Peking People's Daily*, poured venom against the Government of India, Pandit Nehru and those Indian leaders who had formed a committee to help the Tibetans in distress. They accused Pandit Nehru in the most intemperate language of following a policy of imperialism and expansionism. An inspired article published on May 6, 1959, by the Renmin Ribao and republished in the *Peking Review* dated May 12, 1959, entitled "The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy" took strong exception to the expression of sympathy for the Tibetan people by Prime Minister Nehru and other Indian leaders and alleged that this amounted to interference in China's internal affairs. It held out an implied threat that once China's position in Tibet was fully consolidated, she also might foment trouble in India and would be justified in setting up people's committees to support Assam or Uttar Pradesh to oppose policies followed by the Central Government in these States. It accused Pandit Nehru of not showing respect for truth and propriety when he made accusations against China of violating the Sino-Tibetan Agreement and the assurances that China had given to respect Tibet's autonomy. It questioned Nehru's good faith towards China in his extending a welcome to the Dalai Lama and in his going to Mussoorie to meet him. It alleged that the campaign for Tibet's freedom had been built up in India in which the Congress and its leaders, including its President, Indira Gandhi, had participated.

But more significant than these articles was the statement which the Chinese Ambassador in India made to the Foreign Secretary on May 16. He held India responsible for the abnormalities which had crept in in the relations between India and China and repeated

all the arguments mentioned above by the Chinese official newspapers alleging that it was the Indian Government which was responsible for encouraging the Tibetan rebels and for the worsening of the relations between the two countries. Mentioning that for her own security China required a peaceful border in the south-west, meaning China's frontier with India, the Ambassador said that China would not be so foolish as to antagonise the United States in the east and simultaneously antagonise India in the south-west. Then the Ambassador held out an open threat. He said, "Our Indian friends, what is your mind? Will you agree to our thinking regarding the view that China can only concentrate its main attention eastward of China but not south-westward of China, nor is it necessary for it to do so?... Friends, it seems to us that you, too, cannot have two fronts. Is it not so? If it is, here then lies the meeting point of our two sides. Will you please think it over?" The underlying threat was plain. Even as early as 1950 the Chinese had declared that the test of India's friendship with China depended on India unreservedly supporting China's action in Tibet. Therefore, if India was now even morally supporting the Tibetan people, she was committing an unfriendly act towards the Chinese. China deplored this because in view of its preoccupations in the east she would have liked to have a quiet border in the south-west with India. China warned that India was already having enough trouble with Pakistan and if she now persisted in her attitude towards Tibet, China would see to it that another front was opened against her in the north. The Government of India, of course, took strong exception to this undiplomatic and threatening language, but the Ambassador was speaking the words of Mao Tse-tung himself, as he claimed, and so India's objection was contemptuously rejected.

This threat naturally roused the suspicion that China was going to woo Pakistan against India. In fact, in June, 1959, when I was in London, I learnt from an absolutely unimpeachable source that, towards the end of May, the Chinese Ambassador in Karachi had a meeting with the Pakistan Foreign Minister and had stressed the need of China and Pakistan taking a new look at their relations, particularly in the context of the hostile attitude

which India was displaying towards China. According to the source, Pakistan at that stage had made no commitments. On my return to Delhi in July, I mentioned this to both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister and also to the Foreign Secretary. It was plain that a China-Pakistan axis was in the offing.

But it would be incorrect to conclude from all this that China's hostility towards India had started from March, 1959, and was the direct result of India giving asylum to the Dalai Lama and shelter to the Tibetan refugees. China had set her sights much earlier and would adopt any method suitable for the time being to advance towards her goals. Had not Marx said that anything that helped a revolution was moral? Did not Lenin say, "The more powerful enemy can be conquered only by exerting the utmost effort and by necessarily, thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skilfully taking advantage of every, even the smallest, rift amongst the bourgeoisie, of every antagonism of interest amongst the bourgeoisie, of various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, by taking advantage of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be only temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreasonable and conditional. Those who do not understand this do not understand a particle of Marxism or of scientific modern socialism in general."* Against this kind of political thought no approach based on international ethics and morality has any chance of success. Communist China had decided long ago to assimilate Tibet into China and swamp the Tibetan region with the Han population, that is to deluge the three million Tibetans with the weight of seven hundred million Chinese. Previous Chinese Governments, even after conquering Tibet, had been friendly and considerate and had left Tibet more or less to herself and this had given an opportunity to the Tibetans to re-assert their independence whenever the Central Chinese Government had weakened. Communist China was going to make no such mistake. The Indian Government's assistance was useful so long as it served this purpose. If it did not, India's friendship would be spurned and China would go her own way. But the trouble

*V.I. Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder.*

would not end in Tibet. China had claims over large areas in Bhutan, North-East India, Burma and South-East Asia. Even the Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek had included practically all the South-East Asian countries within its concept of the future Chinese empire. The Communist Chinese would pursue the same aim, but they would go step by step and not headlong in an all-out war in all directions. The Chinese Communists had already fully incorporated Inner Mongolia by deluging it with the Hans. They were trying to integrate Sinkiang by creating hostilities among the various nationalities living there and thus making the Han population predominant. They were going to try a combination of these methods in Tibet. Once having consolidated her position in Tibet, China would then thrust further south and south-east and by playing one country against the other, feigning friendship with one and decrying another of chauvinism, she would create disunity amongst them and slowly grab these countries one by one or at least make them completely subservient to her. It was this policy which she had followed steadfastly and, as long as India went on supporting her actions in Tibet, she kept quiet, but once India showed her sympathy for the Tibetans, China threw the friendship away and tried, by hastily concluding treaties with Burma, Nepal, etc., to detach these countries from India's sphere of influence. It was this policy which led her to conclude a friendship pact with the bourgeois military dictatorship in Pakistan, though there could hardly be any meeting ground between these two countries and their only area of agreement was hostility towards India. Any alliance or pact, which would even temporarily help China to attain her goal by putting her likely adversaries in disarray, she was ready to conclude and to renounce it as soon as it had served its purpose. This situation would have arrived as soon as China would find that her position in Tibet was unchallengeable. She had refused all these years to discuss the frontiers between India and Tibet on the ground that the time was not yet ripe for such discussion. She would consider the time to be ripe only when she was in a commanding position in that country and was in a position to threaten the security of India's northern regions and even take over effective control of

some of the areas. Only from a position of strength would she ask the Government of India to agree to a boundary of China's choice between the two countries. Even then though the Government and the people of India might consider that boundary to be permanent, China would regard it only as a frontier of convenience so long as the time was not again ripe for a further discussion to extend her claims southwards.

The Tibetan revolt only hastened the trouble which would have come sooner or later, probably sooner than later, because, long before the Tibetan revolt had occurred and even while Chou En-lai was eloquently professing two thousand years of friendship during his 1956 visit to India, China had already started constructing the road linking Sinkiang and western Tibet through a part of Aksai Chin which in Indian maps was shown as indisputably Indian territory. She did this without even thinking of the formality of informing the Government of India. She had also carried out, as the reports of Karam Singh's patrol parties showed,* extensive surveys in the years 1956 and 1957 to the depth of nearly 70 to 80 miles within Indian territory south of Haji Langar and west of Lanak La. This also could not have been due to the ignorance about the exact position of the Chinese frontier. After having blatantly grabbed a part of Aksai Chin by the end of 1957, the Chinese by 1958 felt bold enough to occupy or claim other parts of Indian territory as they could then talk of maintaining the *status quo* as a handle to force the Indian Government to come to the negotiating table and dictate terms to the latter. So the time according to them was now ripe for a discussion of the frontier. This they did not indicate by adopting normal diplomatic procedures but applying pressure tactics of first deliberately creating incidents on the border and then questioning the validity of the entire frontier.

To the polite reminders from India that Chinese maps showing large parts of Indian territory included in China were still in circulation, the stock reply was that these were old maps prepared by the then Nationalist Government which the Communist Government of China had had no time to revise. Towards the

*See Chapter 13

end of 1954, when Prime Minister Nehru during his Peking visit raised the question of these maps, Chou En-lai gave the same reply. Earlier in 1954, during the negotiations which had led to the signing of the Sino-Indian Agreement, though the Indian team had made out that *all* pending matters would be discussed and settled, the Chinese had insisted that *only* such matters would be discussed and settled as were ripe for settlement. In 1956, when Chou En-lai was in India and Prime Minister Nehru had a talk with him about the boundary, the former had taken the same plea but had also stated that China would recognise the reality of the situation; and, therefore, though the McMahon Line had been forced by British imperialism on a weak China and was not fair, he would accept it because it was an accomplished fact and the Chinese forces would not cross that line because of the friendly relations between the two countries.* About other areas, both the Prime Ministers had agreed that there were minor disputes over small bits of territory and these would be settled by bilateral negotiations when the time came. India's boundaries had been clearly marked in all Indian maps, which showed the whole of Aksai Chin, Soda Plains and Lingzi Tang, the Chang Chenmo Valley, etc. to be a part of Ladakh. Similarly, the whole of NEFA south of the McMahon Line as well as all territory up to the watershed of the Himalayas in Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh was within Indian boundaries. Similarly the northern boundaries of Sikkim and Bhutan were also clearly shown in these maps. So there was no shade of doubt about what India claimed to be her boundary. On the other hand, the Chinese maps were in small scale, the boundary was indefinite and varied in different maps and, except the fact that they included considerable parts of Indian territory in China, they did not help to determine the actual Chinese frontier. Nor did the frontier follow any internationally recognised principles such as watershed, high ranges, etc. The significant point is that though Pandit Nehru had questioned the validity of the Chinese maps,

**White Paper* published by the Government of India containing Notes, Memoranda and Letters exchanged between the Governments of India and China, 1954-59.

Chou En-lai had never done so in respect of the Indian maps. When the Chinese Prime Minister had never questioned the Indian maps and had on the other hand dismissed the Chinese maps as old and had said that they might not be correct and had assured that he would accept the McMahon Line as a reality and also had agreed that there were disputes only over small areas in other parts of the frontier, it would follow that he had generally accepted the validity of the frontier as laid down in the Indian maps.

Of course, the position remained like this so long as China did not find herself strong enough in Tibet and so long as her lines of communication were not reliable and her troops depended to some extent on supplies from India and Nepal. But by the middle of 1958, China had extended her control over all parts of Tibet, opened all the arterial roads from the Chinese mainland and many of the radial roads to the frontiers of India, Bhutan and Nepal. She had also reached a state of self-sufficiency at home and her industrial and economic growth had surprised the world at large. The time, therefore, was ripe for China to show her teeth and this she did by publishing in the *China Pictorial* of July, 1958 (a Chinese official publication), a map of China which showed practically the whole of NEFA, large areas in Ladakh, considerable areas in Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh and even large areas of Eastern Bhutan as part of China. The publication of this map in an official journal meant clearly that the Chinese Communist Government now openly claimed this frontier though it had previously not claimed the correctness of the old maps. Naturally the Government of India protested and, in a note on August 21, 1958, it pointed out the absurdity of the claim over Indian territory made in the Chinese map as published in the *China Pictorial*. The Chinese reply came on November 3, 1958. The old platitudes were repeated and it was again mentioned that this was a reproduction of old maps. But then followed the alarming statement that the Chinese Government had not till then undertaken a survey of the Chinese boundaries, and had not held consultations about them with the countries concerned. In other words, it was for the first time that China was openly questioning the entire boundary of Tibet not only with India but

also with Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Burma. This was completely contrary to what Chou En-lai had stated earlier when he had practically accepted the *de facto* position and the validity of the McMahon Line, though not convinced of its legality, and when he had said that there were disputes only about small bits of territory in other sectors. China, therefore, was now about to lay claim to nearly 52,000 sq. miles of Indian territory.

The Government of India was alarmed. On December 14, 1958, Pandit Nehru addressed a personal letter to Chou En-lai. He said, "There could be no question of these large parts of India as shown in the Chinese maps being anything but India, and there was no dispute about them." Therefore, he did not agree that any survey could affect these well-known and fixed boundaries. Chou En-lai sent his reply on January 23. He said, "The Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited. Historically no treaty or agreement on the Sino-Indian boundary has ever been concluded between the Chinese Central Government and the Indian Government."* He denied expressly the validity of the McMahon Line in the Eastern Sector on the ground that China had never recognised it. He said that in 1954 the Chinese Government had not raised this issue because the conditions were then not ripe for settlement, and again proposed that the boundary might be determined through surveys to be made through mutual consultations, and that, in the meantime, the two sides should maintain the *status quo*. Of course, the *status quo* would mean that the Chinese would be left in possession of that part of Aksai Chin through which they had built their road connecting Sinkiang with western Tibet. It was clear that the Chinese were determined to open up the entire issue of the Indo-Tibetan frontier. They now felt strong enough in Tibet to question India's frontiers and they said this in so many words. All this development had already taken place nearly two months before the Dalai Lama's flight from Lhasa. So any assumption that the Chinese questioned the integrity of India's boundary only as a reprisal against India supporting the Dalai Lama is quite incorrect.

**White Paper* published by the Government of India.

The Government of India and particularly Pandit Nehru were shocked. He sent a detailed reply to Chou En-lai on March 22, 1959, nine days before the Dalai Lama entered India. He pointed out that the boundary which had been clearly shown in the official Indian maps was the actual boundary and had been there for a long time. It was based not only on natural topographical features but was furthermore well-established by tradition, and over a large portion there were international agreements delineating it as in the case of the McMahon Line. He gave a detailed description of the various treaties which had been concluded between China and/or Tibet on the one side and the authorities in India on the other. No reply to this letter came till nearly six months later and, in the meantime, the Chinese were hastily gobbling up a large part of north-east Ladakh and trespassing into Indian territory at quite a number of other places.

During the months of May to September 1959, there were several cases of intrusions by Chinese troops in NEFA, in Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. The Chinese were obviously trying to pick up quarrels and also find holes in the Indian security arrangements. Though in some cases Chinese troops remained in our territory for several weeks, these were temporary intrusions and on our protest the Chinese finally withdrew. But in eastern Ladakh they were following different tactics. Here they came for good and would not withdraw. They first occupied Khurnak Fort and a hill overlooking Chushul and posted a picket at Rezang La. They prevented Ladakhi graziers from going into their large traditional pastures of Nyagzu and Dambuguru. These were not mere cases of frontier violations but in some places of fairly deep penetration within Indian territory. In Nyagzu the penetration was as deep as thirty miles. When an Indian police patrol went towards Khurnak Fort, it was captured and kept under detention for over a month and ultimately released. A serious violation occurred between Mygitun and Longju in NEFA. The border passed between Mygitun and Longju, but the Chinese claimed Longju to be a part of Mygitun and killed three Assam Rifles men on the border and then came and surrounded Longju, which the Indians had to vacate as they were greatly outnumbered

and there was no other alternative. The Chinese later withdrew from Longju but remained in force at Mygitun. The Indians could not re-occupy Longju and had to be content with a post at Maja, a few miles south of it. It was over this Longju incident that China did not get the complete support of Soviet Russia much to her chagrin. Protest notes from one side making allegations of violation and replies refuting the allegations from the other flowed endlessly—the despatches progressively becoming more acrimonious. And all this time the Chinese were stalling their reply to Pandit Nehru's letter of March 22. They wanted to present a *fait accompli* in north-eastern Ladakh before sending their reply; and from July, 1959, commenced their further road-building and penetration in Lingzi Tang further west of the Aksai Chin road in right earnest. So if Chou En-lai in face of actual realities was forced to accept the validity of the Indian claim over NEFA south of the McMahon Line, because of the existence of Indian administration south of that line for many years, in retaliation he wanted to present Pandit Nehru with a *fait accompli* in Ladakh. By September, 1959, China had sent her troops into Chang Chenmo Valley and Lingzi Tang and the time was now ripe for further diplomatic exchanges. A reply to Pandit Nehru's letter dated March 22 came on September 8, 1959.

In this letter, Chou En-lai for the first time categorically stated that the Chinese Government did not recognise the so-called McMahon Line as the Sino-Indian border. He questioned the validity of the entire Sino-Indian border from Ladakh to its junction with Burma. He made a false accusation that Indian troops had invaded Tibet to shield Tibetan rebels. He also made unfounded charges that the tense situation on the Sino-Indian border had been caused due to the provocations given by Indian troops and he held the Indian side fully responsible for it. He accused the Indian Government of being unreasonable in demanding that the Chinese Government should give formal recognition to the conditions which had been created by the application of the British policy of aggression against China's Tibet region and use that as the foundation for the settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary

question. He charged the Indian Government with applying all sorts of pressures against the Chinese Government and also the use of force to support the demand. He continued that the Chinese Government had consistently held that the settlement of the boundary question should be sought by both the sides taking into account the historical background and the existing actualities and adhering to the Five Principles and negotiations being conducted in a prepared way step by step. Pending this as a provisional measure the two sides should maintain the long existing *status quo* on the border and not seek to change it by unilateral action, even less by force. Settlement of the disputes concerning isolated places could be reached through negotiations to ensure the tranquillity of the border areas and uphold the friendship of the two countries. Chou En-lai then, point by point, refuted all the arguments which Pandit Nehru had used in his letter dated March 22 and questioned the validity of every treaty which the latter had quoted. He ended by saying, "The fact that India does not recognise the un-delimited state of the Sino-Indian boundary and steps up bringing pressure to bear on China militarily, diplomatically and through public opinion, cannot but make one suspect that it is the attempt of India to impose upon China its one-sided claims on the boundary question. It must be pointed out that this attempt will never succeed and such action cannot possibly yield any results other than impairing the friendship of the two countries, further complicating the boundary question and making it more difficult to settle."*

The long-standing *status quo* which Chou En-lai talked about was, of course, all right so far as NEFA or Sikkim or Bhutan were concerned because the Indian, the Sikkimese and the Bhutanese Governments had been in administrative control of the territories right up to the border for decades and in any case the Tibetan or the Chinese Government had never exercised any control over them for the last fifty years. But Chou En-lai wanted this position to be equated with the *status quo* which he had gained by making encroachments in north-east Ladakh (Aksai Chin) only two years earlier, a gain which he was trying to extend since the

**White Paper* published by the Government of India.

summer of 1959 by encroaching further into Lingzi Tang west and south of Aksai Chin. The deliberate delay in sending this reply is easily explained when looked at in proper chronological perspective.

This letter of Chou En-lai was followed by a statement made by Chen Yi, the Foreign Minister of China, before the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on September 13, 1959. Chen Yi accused India of drawing its maps in such a way as to cut 38,000 sq. kilometres deep into Chinese territory along the Sinkiang-Tibet-Ladakh section, of invading Parigas, Chuva, Chusa, Shipki Pass, Puling Sumdo, Sangoha and Lapthal along the Tibet-Punjab-Uttar Pradesh frontier and annexing 90,000 sq. kilometres of Chinese territory along the Assam-Tibet frontier. He made the same charges as Chou En-lai had made and threw all diplomacy to the winds by saying at the end, "Prime Minister Nehru said that the Indian Government always tried to steer a middle course. As a matter of fact, to put it more frankly, the Indian Government has always used two-faced tactics. It is, indeed, extraordinary to adopt such tactics towards a friendly country." The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress adopted a resolution reiterating its claim on the territories as mentioned by Chen Yi and also supporting the conditions laid down by Chou En-lai regarding the final settlement.

Thus for the first time the entire Indo-Tibetan frontier, or more correctly at this time the India-China frontier, was thrown into the melting pot and China demanded that negotiations should be started over these disputed territories whose total area would be about 130,000 sq. kilometres. And China was ready to compel India to come to the negotiating table by the use of force as proved by events which followed soon after.

A pertinent question may be asked: Why, in the face of the Chinese construction of the Aksai Chin road and the fact that they had conducted surveys to connect Haji Langar with Lanak La via Shamul Lungpa, did the Indian Government not take immediate steps to secure their position over the rest of Aksai Chin and Lingzi Tang which the Chinese had till then not

occupied? In Chapter 13, I have recounted what happened when Karam Singh's reconnaissance report on the Aksai Chin road passing through Indian territory was discussed in the External Affairs Ministry in January, 1959. The Chief of Army Staff considered that the road was of no strategic importance to India, though he admitted that it was through this road that the Chinese were bringing to western Tibet reinforcements which might threaten eastern Ladakh. In view of this assertion by the Chief of Army Staff, the Foreign Secretary was inclined to soft-pedal the issue particularly as, according to him, the road was an improvement of the old silk route and the territory through which it passed was disputed. My suggestion to open posts at Tsogatsalu, Hot Springs, Kongka La, Shamul Lungpa, Shinglung, Palong Karpo and Saligh Zilganang Kol was considered to be impracticable and unnecessary and in effect provocative. I have also mentioned that on February 16, 1959, I protested in writing against this decision and wanted that this should be put up to the Prime Minister. After that, unfortunately, I had to go away to England where I had to stay till the first week of July. It was in London that I read about the Dalai Lama's escape into India.

Soon after my return, I learnt that earlier the Prime Minister had agreed to my suggestions except in respect of two posts at Palong Karpo and Saligh Zilganang Kol, as these two would be too near the Chinese road. In my absence the Intelligence Bureau had moved the Home Ministry to spare a company of the Central Reserve Police (CRP) to be moved into this area to open the posts. But surprisingly for the first time the Home Ministry turned unsympathetic to our request. The Ministry first questioned the need for opening the posts in an area where "not a blade of grass grew" and then raised various administrative difficulties and said that, as the CRP was fully committed, a new company would have to be raised and this could not be got ready for at least two to three years. So there was no progress in the opening of these posts. When I took up the matter, I found little change in the attitude. The same arguments were repeated. I do not know what influences were working which made the Home Ministry stall the execution of the orders passed by the Prime Minister.

Pandit Pant did not know of this opposition, nor did I talk to him about it as it was always my practice only to take up policy matters with the Prime Minister or the Home Minister and never bother them about administrative details. In the meantime, the Chinese had arrested a police patrol at Khurnak Fort and other trespasses were taking place. The shooting incident at Longju had also occurred. The summer was half through and, unless we could move forces immediately, the whole process would be delayed by one year—giving the Chinese sufficient time to make further encroachments. I was desperate. So I turned to my friend, Wazir Mehra, the Inspector General of Police, Jammu and Kashmir, for assistance. He had a battalion of the CRP in the valley which was not deployed for any immediate work as the valley was then quiet and peaceful. With the concurrence of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, he agreed to release one company out of this battalion for use in Ladakh. We then started negotiating with the Air Force to lift the company with all its equipment to Leh. This took over a month, because the carrying capacity of the Indian Air Force was very limited those days and this was a new commitment which they had not provided for. But as was usual with the Air Force it rose to the occasion and ultimately by the end of September, 1959, the company landed at Leh. All this time we had been carrying on our arguments in files with the Home Ministry for the sanction of a company but making no headway. But I was sanguine that my action to move a Company of CRP from Srinagar to Leh would be upheld by both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister if ever the dispute was referred to them.

We then started moving an existing older Company from Leh to Phobrang under Karam Singh to go ahead to open the posts. The Tsogatsalu post was opened on October 17, and the post at Hot Springs on the 19th. On the 20th one patrol consisting of a local man and a constable was sent towards Kongka La, because the idea was to open the next post at that place. This patrol did not return. So on October 21, Karam Singh with twenty men and a small rear guard moved towards Kongka La in search of the

missing patrol. He found hoof marks on the way, which indicated that some Chinese horsemen had come into that area and probably they had arrested the two Indians. Two miles west of Kongka La, near the bank of the Chang Chenmo river, Karam Singh's party of twenty was ambushed by two Chinese pickets, one perched on a hill top on the flank of the route by which the Indian party was advancing and another located in front on the other side of the river. This was cold-blooded murder and eight of the policemen lay dead in a few minutes. But the rest succeeded in taking some cover and fought till their ammunition ran out. They had killed at least one Chinese officer and injured some others. The party could not return as their retreat was cut off by the Chinese picket on the hill top. They could not escape along the river-bed as this was guarded by the Chinese picket on the other bank. At about dusk the Chinese brought some reinforcements from Kongka La and twelve policemen, including Karam Singh, some of them badly wounded, were taken prisoners. They were taken to Kongka La at the point of bayonets carrying their injured comrades. One constable, who was badly injured, had to be left behind and was killed by the Chinese. At Kongka La they were held in a largish Chinese camp which the enemy had earlier established. Here Karam Singh and other prisoners were made to undergo severe indignities and tortures and they were constantly threatened to confess that they had trespassed into Chinese territory. The Indian Government very strongly protested and ultimately the Chinese released the prisoners and returned the dead bodies on November 14 on the bank of the Silung Barma river which, they claimed, was the western frontier of Tibet. The Silung Barma river was only three miles east of Hot Springs, whereas the traditional frontier for centuries had been at Lanak La, which was forty miles further east. Karam Singh had gone with a patrol up to Lanak La via Hot Springs and Kongka La only four months earlier, i.e. in June. He had not met any Chinese on the way. So there was no doubt that the Chinese trespass in this area occurred after June, 1959. If we had opened the posts in June, we could have forestalled the Chinese. They could, of course, come in force and throw us out as they had done at

Longju; but they could not have claimed the absence of any Indian posts as evidence of their own possession over this territory as they did later.

The Kongka La incident roused Indian anger to a boiling point. There was unanimous condemnation throughout the country, and even the Communist Party, unable to openly support this cold-blooded murder, passed an equivocal resolution deploring the shooting. Parliament observed two minutes' silence in honour of the dead. This incident marked the end of the period of friendship between India and China—friendship which India had tried to foster even in the face of much internal criticism and international ridicule—but which for the Chinese was only a mask to allay India's suspicions till China was in a position to challenge India along the border effectively. But the nine policemen had not sacrificed their lives in vain. It served to warn India against any further professions of Chinese friendship. It opened the eyes of the Indians in general and the Government in particular about the unscrupulous nature of the "friend" they had been dealing with and the nine dead policemen, whose ashes are enshrined at Hot Springs, will serve as a permanent warning to the Indians to beware of the Chinese.* It was clear that the point of no return had been reached. Referring to this, in his Lok Sabha speech on November 27, Pandit Nehru said, "It has made a tremendous difference. There is widespread and deep-seated reaction in our country affecting almost everyone, from a little child to a grown-up man. I might tell you that I am proud of that reaction."

But, unfortunately, this incident instead of making us more active and alert on our frontiers really acted as a damper. On September 23, when the facts of this outrage came to be known, the Prime Minister held a meeting which was attended by the Defence Minister, the Chief of Army Staff and officers from the Ministries of External Affairs, Home and Defence. I was then in Sikkim and Hooja represented me. The Intelligence Bureau was made the common target by the Army Headquarters and the External Affairs Ministry and accused of expansionism and causing

*October 21 each year is observed by the Police all over India as Remembrance Day.

provocations on the frontier. This was ridiculous, because this incident had occurred more than thirty miles within Indian territory and Kongka La stood between this place and Lanak La, the international frontier. In the previous June, Karam Singh's patrol had gone right up to Lanak La and had met no Chinese at either Kongka La or at Lanak La. On the one hand the Government was being accused by Parliament and the people of inaction in allowing the Chinese to have a free run of Aksai Chin; and, on the other, when we were trying to fill up one of the gaps, though inadequately, with civilian armed police, in an area which was indisputably Indian, we were accused by our own side of being aggressors and provocateurs. Moreover, the opening of these posts had been sanctioned by the Prime Minister himself. The Defence Minister did not speak and the officials of the Home Ministry also kept quiet probably because they were also not in sympathy with this move to open posts in Aksai Chin. The only person who supported us was Sarin, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence. The Army demanded that no further movements of armed police should take place on the frontier without their clearance. In complete command of his facts, Hooja fought tenaciously and effectively countered all accusations. But placed as he was, the Prime Minister had to give in to the Army's demand. The result was that the protection of the border was thereafter handed over to the Army and all operations of armed police were made subject to prior approval of the Army command. The Chief of Army Staff had even demanded that all the Intelligence posts and their communications should be placed under his control; but Hooja strongly opposed this move and was supported by Sarin and the Prime Minister deferred a decision on this issue till my return to headquarters.

I got this message at Gangtok on the 23rd night and I came back as soon as the road journey could be completed because heavy rainfall had caused several breaches on the road and as soon as the plane could carry me to Delhi, where I reached on the 25th midnight. Hooja and Dave met me at the airport and we came back to my house where we sat till 3 o'clock in the morning to go over all the reports, consult the maps and to clear

our minds of all doubts and get a proper chronology of events. Due to our faulty communications, reports of this incident had come in bits over the previous three days and was based on the versions of survivors and stragglers and so were not quite clear. However, when we dispersed at 3 a.m. we had a clear idea about the sequence of events as had happened from October 20 onwards.

The next morning as soon as I went to office I met General Thimayya and together we went to meet the Prime Minister. Thimayya, by now, was wiser and he fully supported my version of the incidents and told the Prime Minister that this was the only plausible account and there could be no other. He also did not insist on taking over the Intelligence posts though he still tried to take over the communications. But I insisted that unless I had the communications I would not be responsible for running Intelligence and I would withdraw the posts rather than have all Intelligence messages from the frontier posts routed through the Army and consequently delayed and probably mutilated. I maintained that no Intelligence could function in this way and, therefore, it would be best if the army took over this responsibility in this frontier. The Prime Minister then decided that the Intelligence posts as well as the communications would continue with the IB throughout the whole frontier, though the operation of the armed police from these frontier posts would be controlled by the Army.

I would not blame the Army for their attitude in this matter. They were in no position at that time to guard the frontier effectively or keep units at the checkposts which the lightly equipped armed police were holding. The logistics in Ladakh were against the concentration of any sizeable force in the Aksai Chin area. It was for these reasons that Thimayya had earlier opposed the opening of any Indian posts in this area. If the Police got into any trouble with the Chinese, the Army would necessarily be drawn into it though they would be quite unprepared for it. As they could not yet fight at these places, they would prefer the disputes to be settled at diplomatic level rather than at rifle point. Moreover, in this difficult region the Army would rather let the

Chinese occupy the territory up to their claimed frontier than put up opposition which they were afraid they could not sustain.

But the result was that thenceforward we could not take any initiative in opening posts in areas which were yet unoccupied and which were indisputably within Indian frontiers as we had been doing during the previous eight years. The Army was also not in a position to do so for quite sometime yet. Security of the frontier by the Army only remained on paper, because no additional army units were moved to the frontier till a year later. The units which continued to remain on the frontier were only police and the Assam Rifles. Over-zealous local junior army officers even tried to interfere with the work of the Intelligence posts. All further consolidation of our frontier, which we had started in 1952 under the express orders of the Prime Minister, stopped and the northern frontier of India was frozen at the points which had been secured by the Intelligence Bureau with the help of the CRP, the State police units and the Assam Rifles up to October 21, 1959. Not one square mile of territory could be added to our effective possession after that date.

This immobilisation of our forward patrols was taken advantage of by the Chinese immediately. Unhindered by us, the Chinese rapidly completed the circular Haji Langar-Shamul Lungpa-Lanak La Road of which the Aksai Chin Road was roughly the diameter. This enabled the Chinese to occupy quietly another 8,000 sq. miles of our territory, whilst carrying on a verbal fusillade against the Indian Government. Though the IB went on reporting this further road-building activity, it could only helplessly look on with no means of redress at its disposal.

III

Confrontation

16 China's Aggressive Posture

On September 26, 1959, that is twenty-five days before the Kongka La incident had taken place (October 21, 1959), Pandit Nehru had replied to Chou En-lai's letter dated September 8, in which the latter had called the entire Indo-Tibetan border into question, accused India of causing tension and trouble on the frontier and had also challenged India's right to talk about the frontiers of Sikkim and Bhutan with Tibet. In this letter, Pandit Nehru mentioned that when he had discussed the McMahon Line with Chou En-lai in 1954 and again in 1956 he had gathered the impression that the only problem was to reach an agreement on where exactly that line lay. Even Chou En-lai's letter of January 23, 1959, gave no idea that he was trying to lay a claim to about 40,000 sq. miles of what had been indisputably Indian territory for decades and in some sectors for over a century. Pandit Nehru rebutted the allegation made by the Chinese Prime Minister that India had been applying all sorts of pressures on the Chinese Government to agree to the boundary claimed by India. Pandit Nehru pointed out that, far from doing so, India had been withholding from the public information about the frequent intrusions by Chinese troops into Indian territory and of the construction of the road in Aksai Chin in order not to rouse Indian public opinion against China, a step which, ultimately when the intrussions and violations came to be known, had put the Government of India to a great deal of embarrassment both in Parliament and in the country.

Pandit Nehru maintained that the entire border between India and Tibet had been there for centuries and had been determined by history, geography, custom and tradition. He logically upheld the validity of every treaty which had been entered into by the earlier governments of Tibet and/or China and the British

Government of India or other Indian authorities and pointed out that some of these treaties were more than a century old and the boundary agreed to had remained peaceful and had been recognised as the international boundary for a very long time. He admitted that the boundary, though defined, was not demarcated and, therefore, there might be minor disputes about the actual location of the boundary at some places; but he strongly refuted the Chinese claim to over 40,000 sq. miles of territory which had been for many decades, and in some places for centuries, an integral part of India. Referring to the argument of the Chinese Prime Minister about the discrepancies in the various Indian maps and the allegation that in these maps progressively more areas of Tibet had been shown as part of India, Pandit Nehru said that some of these discrepancies arose because the older maps had shown the administrative and not the international boundaries and also due to the inadequate surveying of these frontier areas some mistakes had been made which, as surveys progressively improved, were corrected in the later maps. He pointed out that the boundaries shown even in the maps which had been quoted by the Chinese in support of their claims corresponded more with the Indian boundary than with the Chinese and, in any case, no maps had shown as part of China the areas which the maps published in the *China Pictorial* had claimed. He pointed out the fallacy of the Chinese citing a particular map in support of a particular section of the boundary but rejecting it so far as other sections of the boundary were concerned. The Prime Minister referred to all the so-called disputed areas which Chou En-lai had claimed and proved effectively that the disputes sought to be raised over them had, in fact, no substance and they were definitely part of India. He also quoted the treaty rights with Sikkim and Bhutan, which left the control of the foreign relations of these two countries with the Indian Government. In this letter, Prime Minister Nehru also repudiated all the baseless charges which the Chinese Prime Minister had made of Indian provocations and recounted briefly the trespasses, intrusions and occupation of territory which had been made by the Chinese forces and which were the real cause of tension and pro-

vocation. He stressed the need for maintaining the *status quo* pending discussion of the border alignment and said that the traditional frontier should be observed. He also repudiated the charge that India was shielding the alleged Tibetan rebels.

In the end, Pandit Nehru said that Chou En-lai's letter dated September 8, had come as a great shock to him. He pointed out that India was one of the first countries which had extended friendship to the people of China and for the last ten years India had consistently sought to maintain and strengthen that friendship. When the 1954 Agreement was signed, he had hoped that the main problems which history had left behind had been peacefully and finally settled. He expressed grief and surprise that five years later the Chinese Prime Minister had brought forward with all insistence a problem which, the Government of India had thought, had been discussed and examined and had been considered to have been settled. Whilst appreciating Chou En-lai's statement that China looked on her south-western border as a border of peace and friendship, Pandit Nehru pointed out that this promise could be fulfilled only if China would not bring within the scope of what should essentially be a border dispute claims to thousands of square miles of territory which had been and continued to be an integral part of the territory of India.

Chou En-lai's reply was received on November 7, 1959. Whilst postponing the consideration of the Prime Minister's detailed letter to a future date, he proposed, as an interim measure, that in the eastern sector both Chinese and Indian troops should withdraw to a depth of 20 kilometres from the so-called McMahon Line. In the western sector, similarly, they should withdraw up to a depth of 20 kilometres from the line up to which each side exercised actual control. He suggested that the civil administrative machinery, however, might be left behind. The most charitable interpretation which could be put on this letter was that China was trying to equate the actual control of India in NEFA up to the McMahon Line, which had existed for decades, with the actual control which China had secured in some parts of north-east Ladakh during the previous two years and which she was trying to extend forcibly, as a result of which the massacre of October 21

at Kongka La had taken place. But this proposal was not so simple as it looked on the surface. Acceptance of this suggestion would mean the acceptance by India of the claims of China to the territory of north-east Ladakh which she had illegally seized and was still in the process of seizing and also throwing open the entire Indo-Tibetan boundary to question even in areas of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. Moreover, once the checkposts were withdrawn it would be impossible to prevent further Chinese intrusion and seizure of those areas which they would later claim as having always been under Chinese control. Actually, there were no Indian troops within 20 miles of the frontier at this time anywhere along the entire Sino-Indian border. There were only units of armed police or the Assam Rifles, which was a normal complement of every civil administration in any part of India. It was necessary to maintain these armed police units in these inaccessible areas with very poor means of communication, particularly when large bands of armed Tibetans were crossing into India every month and they had to be disarmed, taken charge of and escorted to the plains. Moreover, Pandit Nehru had trusted Chou En-lai's words in all good faith too long and he had been badly bitten. He was not going to be duped once again. He had declared even as early as 1950-51 that the McMahon Line was India's frontier, maps or no maps. He was not going to give in on the frontier issue over which the Chinese had kept quiet from 1950 to 1959. Once the Chinese claim that the frontier was not defined was conceded, it would start a process of interminable discussions with no prospect of agreement on any issue as the previous negotiations on Barahoti had shown. In all their correspondence the Chinese never defined what they meant by the line of actual control. The Chinese had surreptitiously grabbed certain parts of the Indian territory in Ladakh. But there was no continuous line of occupation. The first time that the Chinese clearly laid down on paper what they meant by the line of actual control was when they provided in December, 1962, to the Colombo powers the map showing the delineation of the territory claimed by them which they said they controlled—a control which the Chinese had gained at least in some areas by their aggression.

This was one of the classic instances of deliberate vagueness indulged in by the Chinese while defining their various shifting lines with a view to exploit it for future manoeuvres on the ground.

In rejecting Chou En-lai's proposal, Prime Minister Nehru, in his letter dated November 21, reiterated that so far as India was concerned the entire territory up to the border had been for long years part of India and Indian civil administration had been functioning there, and there were important civil administrative centres not far from the frontier. In the north-east frontier, at no point, excepting Longju, were the Chinese forces in occupation of any area south of the Indian frontier. The boundary passed over a difficult terrain, the height of which varied between 14,000 to 20,000 feet, and even in this difficult terrain border checkposts were invariably situated on high hill features. While disclaiming any knowledge of the whereabouts of the Chinese posts, he said that though the distance between the Indian and the Chinese posts might be short on map, the actual travelling distance was much longer and would normally take two to three days to cover. Therefore, he suggested that if the two sides refrained from sending out forward patrols, there could be no danger of any clash. Pandit Nehru also mentioned that so far as Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh were concerned, the civil administration of these States went right up to the frontier and at no place were the Chinese in occupation of any territory south or west of the frontier. So the only precaution that was necessary was not to send any forward patrols. In NEFA, Pandit Nehru made an exception in the case of Longju, the only place where the Chinese forces were south of the McMahon Line, and suggested that the best course would be for the Chinese forces to withdraw from Longju and the Indian forces would also not occupy it. Then there would be no chance of a clash in the future.

He made an exception in the case of the international frontier of Ladakh. He mentioned that though India had given full details of the international boundary, the Indian Government did not know with any precision where the frontier claimed by the Chinese lay. It was all a matter of surmise based on small-scale Chinese maps in which the frontier varied from year to year. Therefore,

there could be no possible observance of a *status quo* as the facts concerning the *status quo* were themselves disputed. Instead of the *status quo* he suggested the following measures: India would withdraw all her personnel to the west of the line which the Chinese Government had shown as the international boundary in its 1956 maps. And, similarly, the Chinese Government would withdraw its personnel to the east of the international boundary which had been described by the Government of India in its earlier notes and correspondence and shown in its official maps. Since these two lines would be separated by long distances, there would not be the slightest possibility of clashes between the forces of either side. As the area was entirely uninhabited, it would not be necessary to maintain administrative personnel in that area.

Pandit Nehru also agreed to meet Chou En-lai after preliminary discussions of these proposals and some progress had been made about their informal acceptance.

From the security point of view we had, when consulted by the Ministry of External Affairs on Chou En-lai's proposals dated November 7, about the demilitarisation of a 20-kilometre belt on each side, strongly objected to this procedure. As explained earlier, all through the frontier except at a few places in NEFA and in the north-eastern Ladakh we were occupying checkposts almost right on the frontier and commanded all the important passes and many of the unimportant tracks from Tibet into India. Our withdrawal to a depth of twenty kilometres from the frontier would have meant in most cases in NEFA our coming down from heights of eight to ten thousand feet to three to four thousand feet, losing all our tactical locations and coming to areas where tracks and passes lost their significance, and in the dense forests it would be no longer possible to check infiltrations even in large numbers. The Chinese withdrawal of twenty kilometres from the border would mean nothing to them. First of all they were not yet in occupation of so many posts on the frontier as we were and there were still large gaps which were not under their administrative control. Their withdrawal would not involve climbing down from the heights, because they would still remain at practically the same height as on the frontier. In the

barren plateau of Ladakh, infiltrators could be as easily checked at the frontier as at distances of twenty kilometres from it. Thus by this withdrawal only the Indian side would lose a great deal whereas the Chinese would give away very little. There was the additional danger that the people on our side of this so-called demilitarised zone would be subjected to large-scale Chinese subversion. Even according to the proposal made by Pandit Nehru regarding Ladakh, we would have lost all our frontier posts at Chumar, Demchok, Koyul, Dungti, Chushul, Tsogatsalu, Hot Spring, Murgo and Daulat Beg Oldi, because these were either on the frontier claimed by India or within twenty kilometres of the Chinese-claimed frontier. It would leave the whole of the Shyok and the Chang Chenmo valleys open to Chinese penetration and as our routes were longitudinal, we would even lose the route to the Karakoram Pass. Of course, the compensation here was that the Chinese would withdraw east of Aksai Chin and would have to leave the Aksai Chin road and also give up the areas like Kongka La, Shinglung, etc. where they had made further instrusions. So, though in south-east Ladakh we would stand to lose unilaterally, in north-east Ladakh our losses would be more or less counterbalanced by the loss suffered by the Chinese, who, in addition, would have to give up the Aksai Chin territory.

That Pandit Nehru was right in suspecting a trap in the Chinese Prime Minister's proposals dated September 7, from which he had adroitly disentangled himself, was proved by the cute proposals which Chou En-lai made on December 17 in reply to Pandit Nehru's letter. Whilst expressing his readiness to accept the proposal that the armed personnel of both the countries should withdraw from Longju, he demanded that the same convention should be followed in case of Khinzemane, Sangcha and Lapthal (Nilang-Jedang), Chuba, Chuze, Puling Sumdo (Barahoti), Sung Sang, Shipki Pass, Parigas (Demchok), all of which he alleged the Indian troops had occupied after the 1954 Agreement. Regarding Pandit Nehru's proposal that patrols should not be sent forward, Chou En-lai agreed but made a condition that this should be observed in the Ladakh sector also. In other

words, as the Indian patrols would no longer be able to go to Lingzi Tang, Aksai Chin and Soda Plains, etc., it would enable the Chinese to quietly occupy them as they were doing after the stoppage of the forward patrols by the Indian police in October, 1959. Whilst characterising the Prime Minister's proposal regarding Ladakh as unfair, he claimed that Aksai Chin had always been a part of Sinkiang Province and also made the false claim that as far back as the latter half of 1950 it was along the traditional route in the area that units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army had entered western Tibet. (This, as we have shown in Chapters 5 and 13, was a false claim, because the Chinese Army came from Hotien-Keriya and it did not pass within 100 miles of the north-eastern extremity of Aksai Chin. The first Chinese group to travel across Aksai Chin was a mule caravan which came in September, 1952, alongan old silk route, which partly existed in this area.) He claimed that since then the Chinese Government had gone on improving this road and had regularly utilised it. (This was true and we had been reporting regularly about the construction of the route, but, as has been explained earlier, no protest was lodged because the Army felt that it was impossible to interfere in this area, and so the Ministry of External Affairs thought it unnecessary to provoke a quarrel over an area over which it was difficult to maintain physical possession.) The Chinese Prime Minister then enquired if the Indian Government would agree to withdraw all its personnel south of the Chinese claimed line in NEFA. Chou En-lai ended by expressing pious hopes that the two Governments would be able to settle their boundary disputes peacefully across the table and said that the two countries still needed long years of peaceful progress and that the peoples of the two countries were expecting friendly talks to be held soon to resolve the dispute and so urged an early meeting between the two Prime Ministers. He suggested that the meeting could take place on December 26 at any place in China or at Rangoon.

Pandit Nehru, in sending his reply on December 21, pointed out that the Chinese Prime Minister was basing his claim on certain parts of Indian territory on the strength of the recent in-

trusions by the Chinese military personnel into them. He further pointed out that it was these intrusions which had brought about a radical change in the situation and had created an atmosphere of tension. He disposed of in one sentence the Chinese allegation of use of force by Indian armed personnel at Kongka La or at Longju and pointed out that the friendly treatment which the Chinese claimed to have given to Karam Singh and his men really amounted to putting them through extreme torture to get statements out of them showing that they had trespassed into Chinese territory, a procedure which was completely against the Geneva convention. Whilst expressing his readiness to meet the Chinese Prime Minister anywhere, Pandit Nehru, however, pointed out that there was no chance of agreement on principles when there was such a complete disagreement on facts. Pandit Nehru also said that he agreed that there was need for peaceful relations between the two countries and further stressed that it was for this reason that, in spite of repeated provocations and violations by the Chinese, he had been continually stressing the need for a peaceful settlement of the problems between the two countries.

On December 26, a detailed note was handed over to the Indian Ambassador in Peking by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. This purported to be a reply to the detailed note which India had sent earlier on the dispute about the frontier. In this letter, the Chinese raised several questions and purported to give the answers. The first question was: "Has the Sino-Indian boundary been formally delimited?" The reply questioned the authenticity of all the treaties, the right of the contracting parties, and stressed the indefinite nature of the borders indicated in the treaties, and finally claimed that the fact that the entire Sino-Indian boundary, whether in its western, middle or eastern sector, had not been delimited was incontestable.*

*In all their correspondence and arguments contesting the basic principles of boundary alignment on which the Indian case was built, the Chinese deliberately confused the use of the words "definition", "delimitation", "delineation" and "demarcation". They invariably sought to exploit the absence of actual physical demarcation on the ground to create the impression that the border did not even have juridically recognizable definition (verbally) or delineation (in maps).

The second question which it raised was: "Where is the traditional, customary Sino-Indian boundary?" After disputing all the facts given in India's letters, it finally stated that in the western Ladakh sector the traditional customary boundary was the one which China had indicated. Regarding the middle sector, the Chinese contested the watershed principle and also the fact of actual jurisdiction exercised, and asserted that it was China which had abided by the traditional customary line in its maps. With regard to the eastern sector, it completely challenged the legality of the McMahon Line, asserted that China's Tibet had been exercising jurisdiction over large areas of NEFA till the Britishers started encroaching on it and also cited certain foreign maps forgetting the mass of other evidence, and held that the boundary here was as had been claimed in the Chinese maps, which was along the foothills of NEFA.

The letter then raised the third question: "What is the proper way to settle the Sino-Indian border dispute?" In this context it criticised the Indian Government's stand that the delimitation of the boundary had already been agreed to by the Chinese Premier at several meetings and again raised the following questions :

(1) "Whether the Chinese Government has ever agreed that the boundary was delimited and accepted the Indian Government's claim regarding the boundary and changed its stand afterwards?"

In its reply it argued that the Chinese Premier had never accepted India's contention that the boundary had been delimited whatever other things he might have said and, therefore, came to the conclusion that the Chinese Government had been consistent in its attitude that the boundary had not been delimited and was yet to be settled through negotiations between the two governments.

(2) The next question raised was : "Whether the Chinese Government scrupulously respects the *status quo* of the border?"

It said that it was the Indian Government which had encroached at various places and, therefore, finally answered the question by saying that whilst the Chinese Government had scrupulously respected the border, it was the Indian Government which had flouted the *status quo*.

(3) Yet another question raised was: "Whether the Chinese Government has earnestly avoided using force?"

Referring to the shootings in Longju and Kongka La, the reply roundly put the blame on the Indian personnel, quoted instances where the Chinese did not use force and said that the Chinese Government had adopted all possible measures to maintain the tranquillity of the border and to prevent the use of force and the occurrence of armed clashes.

(4) A fourth question was: "Whether China wants to engage in aggression and expansion?"

The reply mentioned that China had large unoccupied areas in its own country and was not in need of encroaching into foreign territories. It showed that its own agricultural and economic condition had shown a great leap forward and, therefore, it was not necessary for China to aspire after some desolate areas in other countries. Therefore, the Chinese Government did not want even an inch of other people's territory and so proved that it was the Indian Government which was falsely accusing the Chinese Government of aggression etc., and said that China's peaceful and friendly attitude towards India would stand the test of time.

(5) Finally, the last question raised was : "Where lies the key to the settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary?"

In reply it said that there could be no dispute about the basic fact, which was known throughout the world, that the entire boundary between the two countries had never been delimited

and was yet to be settled through negotiations. It tried to show an attitude of reasonableness by saying that even though the boundary was not delimited, it would be possible to reach agreement by mutual discussions and finally repeated Chou En-lai's suggestion that the armed forces of the two countries should withdraw 20 kilometres from the actual line of control. The final paragraph was interesting and so deserves to be quoted. It said, "China and India are two great countries each with its great past and future. Today history again issues a call to the peoples of the two countries asking them to make still greater contributions to the cause of peace and human progress while accomplishing tremendous changes at home. The task falling on the shoulders of the Chinese and the Indian peoples of the present generation is both arduous and glorious. The Chinese Government wishes to reiterate here its ardent desire that the two countries should stop quarrelling, quickly bring about reasonable settlement of the boundary question and on this basis concentrate and develop the great friendship of the two peoples in their common cause." The appeal, therefore, was directly to the people of India telling them that it was to their interest to force the Government of India to take a reasonable attitude *vis-a-vis* China (that is, agree with the demands made by the Chinese Government).

On February 5, 1960, Prime Minister Nehru sent another letter to Chou En-lai suggesting that though there was very little chance of an agreement being arrived at between the two countries, because the Chinese were contesting the facts of history, yet a meeting between the two Prime Ministers might be helpful, and suggested some time in March for this purpose. With this letter was enclosed a detailed note by the Government of India which was a point by point reply to all the questions raised by the Chinese in their note dated December 26. The Government of India maintained that the boundary, though not actually delimited or demarcated on the ground, was clearly defined by facts of history, by treaties, by custom, by geography, and these could not be contested. It said that it was clearly impossible for the Government of India to accept the proposition of the Chinese Government that the entire boundary between the two countries

had never been delimited, as this was clearly against the facts of history, geography, custom, tradition and international agreements. The note further said that the facts enumerated in it entirely disproved the Chinese Government's contention. Therefore, while the Government of India were anxious for the settlement, they could not accept suggestions which gravely prejudiced their position. The Government of India also pointed out that though there had been no trouble over the border for the first eight or nine years after the Chinese came into Tibet, these troubles had suddenly started occurring during the last one year or so. The Government of India were unable to understand the reason for this and said that if there were any deeper reasons for the Chinese to create this tension, the Government of India were unaware of them.

Chou En-lai agreed to come to Delhi on April 19, 1960. In this exchange of correspondence between the two Prime Ministers or between the two Governments, whereas the Prime Minister or the Government of India referred to the dispute as between the two countries, the Prime Minister or the People's Government of China always tried to separate the people of India from their Government for any share in the responsibility. In all letters coming from China there was generally a paragraph towards the end expressing the pious hope that as the people of the two countries wanted peace, peaceful relations between the two countries should be restored, meaning, in other words, that whereas the Chinese Government was quite responsive to the aspirations of the people of China, the Indian Government was not and was acting in a way which would ultimately hurt the interests of the Indian people, thereby trying to separate the masses of the Indian people from their Government. This was in line with the propaganda which was being carried on in all the Chinese newspapers against the Government of India being a government led by the bourgeoisie in league with the imperialists oppressing the common man in India. The obvious appeal was to the supporters in India of the Chinese Communist Party and, as Giri Lal Jain in his book *Panch-sheela and After* has shown, the Communist Party of India, which was then still united, took up the refrain, blamed the so-

called serf-owners in Tibet for all the trouble, shut their eyes to the fact that amongst the Tibetan refugees who had migrated to India or were still migrating, over 95 per cent were ordinary labourers, muleteers, artisans, tillers of the land and petty traders and they were by no means serf-owners. The Communist Party also lent its support to the charge laid by the Chinese Government of Kalimpong being a commanding centre of the rebellion and the CPI extended warm greetings to the Communist Party of China under whose guidance the People's Government of China was leading the people of Tibet from medieval darkness to prosperity and equality—(medieval darkness really standing for freedom and liberty and prosperity and equality for oppression and slavery). The Communist Party also supported China's claim that the Sino-Indian border was not delimited and criticised the Government of India for not agreeing to the just proposal of the Chinese Government for a settlement by discussion.

Referring to this apparent lack of unity in India on issues of great national importance, Pandit Nehru told us at a briefing as follows: He considered that the multi-party system existing in India was right and he welcomed criticisms against the Government. He, however, stressed that there were certain basic factors on which there should be no difference but unity and solidarity. He deplored that in India some opposition parties carried this criticism to a sphere which, whether it injured the Government or not, injured the interests of India as a whole. He said that in other countries, in case of war, few Opposition groups criticised their own country, but in India many of the activities of some of the Opposition groups had been anti-national. Referring to the India-China conflict, he said that any propaganda which supported China against India produced an impression of internal trouble in India and gave impression that India was weak and encouraged China to throw her weight a little more. It was one thing to criticise the Government and another to create an impression of weakness and division in the country. Earlier in his reply to the Lok Sabha debate on November 27, 1959, whilst welcoming criticism he had said that "in a moment of crisis one should not do anything to encourage the opponent or the enemy".

It is unfortunate that some writers have criticised Prime Minister Nehru and alleged that even the events which occurred in October, 1959, did not open his eyes to the real nature of the danger that was facing him, nor did he make any preparations to meet that danger. This is an unfair criticism, because Pandit Nehru clearly visualised the developments that might take place and he gave expression to this in his Lok Sabha address on November 27, 1959. He said, "The issue to my mind is big. We are sitting on the edge of history. If this unfortunate conflict occurs, we shall become a nation of armies. Every single activity, every single thing that we do, the Plan and so on, would have to be conditioned by one major fact, because that will be a struggle for life and death. If the two biggest countries of Asia are involved in conflict, it would shake Asia and shake the world. It is not a small border issue that we are troubled about. The issues surrounding it are so huge, vague, deep-seated, far-reaching and intertwined, that one has to think about them with all the clarity and strength at one's command, and not be swept away by passion into action which may harm us instead of doing us good."

At a briefing to us shortly before the Chinese Prime Minister's visit to India, Pandit Nehru referred to the new danger that had arisen between India and China and said that the economic advance which the country was making was important in the face of this danger. He said that China by adopting methods of coercion and unhappiness was rapidly becoming a strong and industrialised nation, and if one added to that the vast population of China, the combination of the two became an explosive factor. It was clear that in the course of the next twenty years the problem of China might become a dominant problem, almost the most dominant problem, explosive and dangerous from the world point of view and not only from the Indian point of view. The picture of a highly industrialised State with a vast growing population and a dictatorial method of government bursting its bounds worried most people in Europe and elsewhere. Even the Soviet Union was worried. Though the Soviet Union was a friend of China and had given her much help in the economic field, there was a lurking fear in the mind of that country about the future

of China. They would not break with China immediately, though the old sort of friendship and understanding that was expected of the alliance was no longer there, and was not likely to be there in future. This was an important factor and though India must not overrate it, it was still a fact to be remembered. He mentioned that the only other major country in Asia was India and if India maintained her progress, she was sure to catch up with China. He then referred to the new problems that had arisen on the frontier as a result of the Chinese aggression and said that for the first time something of historical significance had emerged on this frontier. For the first time in history India and China were looking at each other across the frontier angrily. This had not happened throughout history. The frontier had never been a live frontier; it was, broadly speaking, a dead frontier. But now this vast frontier across the Himalayas in the north and north-east had been converted into a very live and a dangerous frontier. Quite apart from being a major danger, therefore, there was an abiding danger in this frontier. He did not visualise an immediate war between India and China because it was in nobody's interest. Apart from India's natural dislike for war, the terrain and the weather conditions were unfavourable to India and, due to mere enthusiasm and anger, India could not allow herself to be trapped in the high mountains from which it might be difficult to extricate. No army would like to fight on a ground that was unfavourable. These were the various factors for consideration. He referred to the forthcoming visit of Chou En-lai and said that whatever might be the result, even if it was a favourable result, the fact would continue that this frontier had become a dangerous, live and explosive frontier. India could never go back to that period when that frontier was a dead frontier by the mere fact that a strong, well armed State was standing on the other side. The frontier would remain dangerous unless China broke up, which was not going to happen easily.

Apart from committing aggression on the frontier, occupying fairly large sections of Indian territory and disputing the entire Indo-Tibetan boundary, all through the year 1959, China went on creating trouble for India in Tibet and even in Indi a. This con-

tinued in 1960 also and did not abate even temporarily before or after Chou En-lai's visit. False allegations were often repeated of so-called Indian land or air intrusions in Tibet. The New China News Agency at Delhi issued a reproduction of the *Peking People's Daily*'s editorial on "The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy" and distributed it widely throughout India. This, as stated earlier, was a downright abuse of Pandit Nehru calling into question his very honesty. When the Government of India protested against the circulation of this document, the Chinese Government justified it by saying that the article contained legitimate criticism. Yet when the Indian Embassy bulletin carried a criticism of China by the Praja Socialist Party, the Chinese Foreign Office took serious exception to it. China's hand fell heavily on the working of the Trade Agencies at Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok. The Chinese interfered in the construction work of the Gyantse Agency building which had been destroyed by floods. They arrested the Tibetan servants of these Agencies on false pretexts. A primary school run by the Agency at Yatung was prevented from taking Tibetan pupils. A doctor and a dentist attached to the Agency were prohibited from attending to Tibetan patients even though there was no other medical facility available there. All contacts between these Trade Agencies and Tibetans were stopped. The Trade Agent at Gartok was refused permission even to go to recognised trade marts. Pilgrim traffic to Kailash and Mansarovar was interfered with on the plea of disorder by the Khampas and was ultimately stopped altogether. The Indian Consul at Lhasa was not allowed to move more than two miles outside his Consulate. The doctor there was not allowed to treat Tibetan patients. No Tibetan visitor to the Consulate was allowed. The Chinese tried to brain-wash a large number of Kashmiri Muslims at Lhasa by forcing them to attend indoctrination classes and would not admit any right of the Indian Consul to intercede on their behalf. Several ristrictions were also imposed on trade by Indian merchants in Tibet. They were not allowed to send remittances to India, were forced to open accounts in the China Bank and had to account for every item of

commodity sold or purchased in Tibet to the Chinese authorities. Thus the working of the Trade Agreement was also brought to a standstill. It was clear that China's aim was to make it impossible for the Consulate at Lhasa and the Trade Agencies at Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok to function normally, to stop all cultural and personal intercourse between the Indians and the Tibetans, to stop trade unless carried through Chinese official agencies and even prevent pilgrimage by Indians to Tibet. Thus all cultural and trade rights of India in Tibet were more or less denied not in words but in deeds. Further the Chinese-sponsored *Lhasa News* published articles attacking India.

All this time, China went on abusing the privileges which her Consulate and Trade Agencies enjoyed in a free country. The China Bank cornered all trade with Tibet and also trade by the considerable Chinese population in Calcutta, Bombay and Assam; the Consulate officials made frequent journeys to Assam, Darjeeling and all over the country; the Chinese population in Calcutta and Bombay were coerced into denouncing the KMT and supporting the Communist regime; the Consulate officials maintained regular contacts with members of the CPI and other opponents of the Government of India; and the NCNA carried full-length criticisms of the Government of India by reproducing statements of Chinese leaders or newspaper editorials. *The China Review*, published in Calcutta, started open vilification of the Government of India. Ultimately the Government of India was forced to take reciprocal measures—though even these were taken rather haltingly. Restrictions were placed on the visitors to the Chinese Trade Agency at Kalimpong. Both the NCNA and the *China Review* were severely warned; some recalcitrant and trouble-making Chinese were deported; and the Reserve Bank started a check on the activities of the China Bank, which was rightly suspected of spending money for espionage purposes.

The Government of India's handicap was that it wanted the trade and cultural ties with Tibet to continue. The Chinese wanted to break these ties and went about systematically doing so. Any action that India could take in retaliation would only help

the Chinese in their diabolical aim of isolating Tibet from India. So the action by the Government of India was halting. But ultimately it was forced to go the whole hog and match every action by the Chinese in Tibet or by China against India or Indians by action in India against the Chinese or China. So the period of friendship was over and from the end of 1959 and the beginning of 1960, the period of confrontation started. In this atmosphere, the Chinese Premier's visit in April, 1960, was doomed to failure, though Chou En-lai wanted to score a diplomatic victory over India, and probably succeeded in doing so, by creating an impression in the world about his desire for peace, China's reasonableness and India's obduracy. His troops were, of course, all this time making further encroachments in north-east Ladakh.

17 China Tries to Isolate India

CHOU EN-LAI ACCEPTED Pandit Nehru's invitation to come to Delhi to discuss the differences that had arisen over the frontier and fixed April 19 to 25 as the dates of the visit.

But before visiting Delhi, he went about trying to woo Burma and Nepal, which bordered India and which had very friendly relations with India. Indeed, the Indo-Nepalese Pact went so far as to recognise that the two countries should consult each other in case of aggression against either of them.

On January 29, 1960, at the conclusion of General Ne Win's visit to Peking, a border agreement and a treaty of friendship and non-aggression between China and Burma were signed. The border agreement laid down that a joint committee would be set up to survey and demarcate the boundary. Burma agreed to part with certain parts of Burmese territory, Hpimaw, Gawalum, etc. in favour of China and in return got the Namwan tract. Burma also agreed to hand over the areas inhabited by Panhung and Panlao tribes. In any case, the Burmese had no effective control over these areas. But Burma's traditional boundary in the north with Tibet as defined by the McMahon Line was recognised and the watershed principle was accepted though not mentioned in so many words. The only point left undecided was the trijuncion of India, Burma and Tibet. The Chinese claimed this to be at Diphu Pass which was five miles south of Talu Pass which was till then recognised as the trijunction. It should be mentioned here that talks with Burma had been going on for several years and had bogged down due to the intransigence of the Chinese who had made claims over large tracts of Burmese territory. So the fact that, during the height of her dipute with India, China suddenly changed her attitude, showed a spirit of accommodation and reason and conceded to Burma practically all that the

latter had demanded showed that this was done to spite India and to prove to the world how reasonable China was and that it was India and not China which was motivated by big power chauvinism.* But this border agreement in no way stopped the Chinese army from frequently making deep incursions inside Burmese territory and this continued year after year. So the agreement was entered into as a matter of convenience to suit China's interests at that time.

Another agreement was signed with Nepal during the Nepal Prime Minister, B. P. Koirala's visit to Peking on March 21, 1960. The agreement provided for economic aid to Nepal and the establishment of embassies on a reciprocal basis. It also mentioned that a treaty of friendship would be signed during Chou En-lai's return visit to Kathmandu between April 26 and 29. B. P. Koirala was asked to sign a non-aggression pact to which, however, he did not agree. Koirala was informed that China was building roads to Nepal's frontier. A mass para-dropping exercise was held to impress upon Koirala and S. P. Upadhyaya, who had accompanied him, that China could at any moment capture Kathmandu and India could not do anything to prevent it. Every attempt was made to convince Nepal that she need no longer depend on India for her development and defence. The agreement on the border said that the conflicting parties had decided to determine concretely the boundary between the two countries in the following ways: in sections where the delineation of the boundary line between the maps of the two countries was identical, the boundary would be fixed according to the identical delineation. In sections where the delineation varied, but the actual jurisdiction was undisputed, the actual jurisdictional boundary would be accepted; and where the delineation of the boundary and the actual jurisdictions both varied, adjustments would be made working on the principles of equality, etc. A joint survey team would be sent out by the joint committee to carry out this survey.

In this case, also, China was making a deep dent in an area of

* This is confirmed by the fact that in 1961 the Chinese were having second thoughts on this issue See Chapter 18).

undoubted Indian influence which had lasted for over a century. India and Nepal differed from each other only politically. Otherwise by culture, religion and language (both Hindi and Nepali springing from Sanskrit), trade, marriage and social intercourse there had been eternal amity between these two countries and there was no need to have this set out in a formal treaty. There was no passport system between these two countries and thousands of Nepalese enjoyed the same freedoms of employment and movement in India as any other Indians. Indeed, the Gurkhas formed a strong section in the Indian Army and the Indian Armed Police or armed guards. Just as there was a large population of Indian origin in Nepal Terai, similarly there was a large population of Gurkhas in Darjeeling district, South Sikkim, South Bhutan and in Assam and even in the tea gardens of North Bengal. In the past whenever the British Government was in trouble, Nepal had always sent a symbolic force to India to assist the British Government to prove her solidarity with British India; and, of course, the famous Gurkha battalions fought in both the world wars not only in Burma and South-East Asia but in West Asia, Ethiopia, North Africa and even in Italy. So this was the first breach which China was making in India's traditional and centuries-old friendship and unity with Nepal by offering a treaty of friendship and economic aid and by a show of generosity in settling the border without making too big a claim on Nepal. Indeed, China even went so far as to concede that Mount Everest was in Nepal, though previously she had stoutly contested this point.

But more ominous than all this was the reply which China gave to India's letter dated February 12, 1960, which, in turn, had refuted the Chinese arguments in their letter dated December 26, 1959. In this letter, the Chinese maintained their stand that the entire Indo-Tibetan boundary had not been delimited, put the blame on the Indian Government for every dispute that had arisen, maintained that the disputed territories had always been under China's occupation and alleged that Tibet, which used to exercise effective jurisdiction over large parts of NEFA, had been unlawfully deprived of that jurisdiction by the British

when the Chinese Central Government was weak. In conclusion, the letter said that the entire Sino-Indian boundary had never been formally delimited and the areas now disputed by the two sides (and this included North-East Ladakh, portions of East Ladakh, portions of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and practically the whole of NEFA) had always belonged to China with a considerable part of them remaining up to now under the effective control of the Chinese Government. It, however, stated at the end that the Chinese Government hoped to achieve a reasonable settlement of the boundary question through friendly consultations with the Indian Government. This letter, also, carried an appeal almost direct to the people of India over the head of the Indian Government in the following words: "The Chinese Government feels that no matter how great the present differences between China and India on this particular question is, it is after all an issue of limited and temporary nature compared with the fundamental need of the two peoples to maintain friendly cooperation for thousands and tens of thousands of years to come. Provided the two sides value the fundamental interests of friendship between the two countries and world peace, and display good faith, etc., it was possible to overcome all difficulties." The Chinese Government further said that it did not want to put any preconditions for discussions with India and would try its best to achieve agreement by healthy discussions. Thus whilst setting at naught every treaty and every agreement lasting over the last 200 years, China with a false show of generosity presented the olive branch to India not so much to effect a permanent settlement but to rouse the people of India against their Government by trying to prove that it was the latter's obduracy and bad faith which were destroying the age-old friendship between China and India, the continuance of which for a long time to come was essential to their interest.

Chou En-lai accompanied by his formidable Deputy, Marshal Chen Yi, arrived on April 19. In his speech at the airport, Prime Minister Nehru referred to the shattering of all the dreams of age-old friendship due to the unilateral action of the Chinese during the previous few months and mentioned that it would be

difficult to bridge this gulf. Chou En-lai repeated what had been stated in the Chinese Government's note dated April 3 and said that whatever the difficulties the friendship between the two countries would endure for thousands of years. In the banquet speech on April 20, whilst referring to the friendship and cooperation between China and India, which had been expected to be a guarantee of peace in Asia, Prime Minister Nehru said: "We meet today, however, under different circumstances when serious disagreements have arisen unfortunately between us....It is strange and a matter of great sorrow for us that events should have so shaped themselves as to challenge the very basis of our thinking and caused our people to apprehend danger on our peaceful frontiers along the Himalayan mountains which we have loved for thousands of years and which have stood as sentinels guarding and inspiring the people.... Much has happened which has pained our people; much has been said which had better been left unsaid. We have to try to the best of our ability to find a right and peaceful solution to the problems that have arisen."

There were long meetings between the two Prime Ministers. Chou En-lai and Chen Yi also met several other Indian leaders like G. B. Pant, Dr. Radhakrishnan and Krishna Menon. Throughout the discussions the Chinese side maintained its offensive; not one word of regret was uttered about what had been done on the frontier; and not a word was said about the killing of the Indian policemen and the difficulties which had been created in the working of the Indian missions in Tibet. Instead they tried to put all the blame for the happenings on India. In spite of the so-called offer of no forward patrolling by the armed personnel of each side in North-East Ladakh, the Chinese were carrying on the construction of their circular road from Haji Langar via Shamul Lungpa to Lanak La and, when Pandit Nehru enquired about this, the Chinese Premier blandly denied any knowledge of it. The obvious attempt was to present this as a *fait accompli* and on the basis of that argue that this area had always been under Chinese occupation.

Some writers have tried to conclude that at this stage China was willing to accept the McMahon Line largely as the border in

the eastern frontier and probably even to accept the existing watershed principle for the boundary in Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh in exchange for the Indian recognition of Chinese possession of North-East Ladakh. But there had been no concrete suggestion about this either in the Chinese letters or in the talks, and whether this was the intention of the Chinese Prime Minister could only be a matter of surmise. In their arguments the Chinese maintained that they had always been in possession of North-East Ladakh and so they were not willing to discuss this question. And not only that, they also claimed jurisdiction over large areas of NEFA and also certain areas in Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. It was true that they had not yet sent any troops south of the McMahon Line. But it must be pointed out that up till then they were not in a position to do so; they were still consolidating their hold on the Tibetan frontier areas and building their road communications. Therefore, it would have been foolish and hazardous for India to suggest a barter deal by swoping NEFA for North-East Ladakh. In this the Chinese would immediately have found the recognition by the Government of India of Chinese "traditional" control of North-East Ladakh and also of India's weak position in NEFA. The dispute then would have been only on the NEFA frontier and China would have claimed large chunks of NEFA, though not the whole of it, and still pretend to be magnanimous in her offer. She certainly would have claimed large chunks of the Kameng Division, i.e. the whole of Tawang up to Sela Ridge and of Lohit Division up to Walong and Hayuliang.

But even had there been a firm Chinese offer of a barter deal, the fact was that Indian public opinion had been roused to such anger at that time that it would have been impossible for the Government of India to accept such a deal. The Government had already been very strongly criticised in Parliament and in many newspapers and public meetings for its inaction in allowing the Chinese to occupy North-East Ladakh. The opposition parties and even many Congressmen were very suspicious about the outcome of the meeting between the two Prime Ministers and apprehended that India might cave in under the relentless pressure

of the Chinese. Indeed, there was a mammoth procession led by opposition parties to the house of Prime Minister Nehru protesting against the meeting and Pandit Nehru had to appear before the demonstrators and make a promise that not an inch of Indian soil would be bartered away. Moreover, the Chinese Prime Minister did not at all behave as an equal in this talk. He flaunted himself as the representative of the greatest and the most powerful nation in Asia and offered solutions which were wholly in the Chinese interest and had no semblance of any "give-and-take" or *Panchsheel*. Indeed, Dr. Radhakrishnan had to remark to Marshal Chen Yi that the latter was talking like a Marshal and not as a Foreign Minister and trying to lay down terms as a victor to the vanquished.*

So the talks were doomed to failure and the interminable discussions ended unsuccessfully on April 25, with the issue of a communiqué in which both the Prime Ministers conceded that though the talks had been cordial and had led to a better understanding of the views of the two countries, they did not result in resolving the differences that had arisen. The only agreement reached was to set up a joint team of officials of the two countries to examine, check and study all the historical documents, records, accounts and maps and other material relative to the boundary question on which each side relied in support of its stand and draw up a report for submission to the two Governments.

Chou En-lai addressed a press conference, which lasted for two hours, on April 25 at Delhi. In this he issued a written note to the press containing the following views of the Chinese Government, an acceptance of which might lead to a Sino-Indian understanding on the frontier:

(1) There exists a dispute on the boundary between the two parties.

(2) There exists between the two countries a line of actual control up to which each side exercises administrative jurisdiction.

*Mentioned by Dr. Radhakrishnan to the writer a couple of years later.

(3) While determining the boundary between the two countries certain geographical principles, such as watershed, river valleys and mountain passes would be applicable equally to all sectors of the boundary.

(4) A settlement of the boundary question between the two countries should take into account the national feelings of the two peoples for the Himalayas and the Karakoram mountains respectively.

(5) Pending settlement of the boundary question through discussions, both sides should keep to the line of actual control and should not put forward territorial claims as preconditions, but individual adjustments may be made.

(6) In order to ensure tranquillity on the border so as to facilitate the discussions, both sides should continue to refrain from patrolling along all sectors of the boundary.

Replying to questions, the Chinese Prime Minister also said that during his talks with the Indian leaders the latter had never charged the Chinese with aggression. Explaining this point in his Lok Sabha speech on April 26, the Prime Minister said that the main issue which was under discussion was Chinese occupation of a large portion of Indian territory and it was unnecessary to mention aggression in that context; but this, in fact, was aggression.

Chou En-lai flew from India to Nepal, embittered and angry, and, at a midnight press conference in Kathmandu, he gave full vent to his rage and blamed the Indian Government roundly for the failure of the talks. Probably he staged this in order to browbeat the Government of Nepal to sign the friendship agreement. He also extracted an agreement out of the Nepal Government to build a road connecting Tibet with Kathmandu. On his way back to China, at Calcutta airport he took exception to Pandit Nehru's reference in the Lok Sabha to Chinese occupation of areas in North-East Ladakh as an act of aggression.

Why did Chou En-lai come to New Delhi when it was quite clear that the talks were doomed to fail? He came primarily to create an impression in the Afro-Asian world of China's reason-

able attitude on all questions relating to her borders with the neighbouring countries. With this end in view, he had hastily drawn up agreements to settle the border problems with Burma and Nepal. He also wanted to create an impression among the people of India of China's love for peace and friendship and thus encourage the fellow travellers in India to agitate so that the Government of India could be forced to agree to the Chinese demands. Chou En-lai had also hoped to bully the Indian leaders to accept the Chinese terms by exhibiting the mailed fist and, indeed, veiled references were made to India's having to fight on two fronts, that is Pakistan on one side and China on the other. But more important than all this was that this gave China more time and opportunity to grab further chunks of territory in Aksai Chin, Lingzi Tang and Nyazu-Nyngri areas which she had not till then been able to occupy. Indeed, as events would show in later chapters, she was carrying on intrusions till nearly the end of 1961. The cry of Karakoram being dear to the Chinese was really a far cry, because few Chinese had ever seen or even heard of the Karakoram Range and, even according to the Chinese maps and according to their claimed line, the Karakoram did not form the boundary excepting only in Northern Ladakh where it was not the main but a subsidiary Karakoram Range. At this place the boundary was not in dispute.

Regarding the setting up of the officials' teams to undertake an examination of the materials relating to the border, the joint communique issued by the two Prime Ministers on April 25, 1960, stated as follows:

> "The two Prime Ministers agreed that officials of the two governments should meet and examine, check and study all historical documents, records, accounts, maps and other materials relevant to the boundary question on which each side relied in support of its stand and draw up a report for submission to the two governments. This report would list the points on which there was agreement and the points on which there was disagreement or which should be examined more fully and clarified. This report should prove help-

ful towards further consideration of these problems by the two governments."

It was also agreed that the meeting of the officials should take place from June to September, 1960, alternately in Peking and Delhi. The Indian team was headed by J.S. Mehta, Director of the China Division, Ministry of External Affairs, and assisted by four experts, and the Chinese team by Chang Wen-chin, Director, First Asian Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and three or four experts.

The two teams ran into difficulties from the very beginning over the interpretation of the terms of reference. Whereas the Indian team maintained that their task was only to examine all the available material regarding the boundary question and submit points of agreement and disagreement, the Chinese team insisted that the political aspects of the matter should also be discussed and laid stress on the three points which Chou En-lai had mentioned in his press conference at Delhi on April 25, 1960. However, ultimately after several discussions it was agreed to confine themselves to the question of examination of the material only and not go into the political question. Though in its report the Indian team confined itself to its charter, the Chinese team included political aspects also in its own report.

Finally, after three series of meetings in Peking, Delhi and Rangoon, the Indian team submitted its report on December 12, 1960, and this was released soon afterwards by the Government of India. But the Chinese Government did not release the Chinese part of the report till January, 1962, and that also after making several important changes and adding to the Chinese draft new material which the Chinese officials had not laid before the Indians.

However, the outcome of this exchange of materials was that there appeared such a wide divergence of views regarding the boundary that there seemed to be hardly any point of agreement excepting over some small areas near Hanley in Ladakh and in the North-East Himachal Pradesh and in North-East UP. On the eastern sector, whereas the Indian side claimed the McMahon

Line as the boundary, the Chinese claimed the foothills less than 50 miles from the Brahmaputra, as the traditional boundary. Besides this, the Chinese refused to discuss the Ladakh-Sinkiang boundary west of Karakoram Pass holding that this part of territory was not under Indian occupation. Also, they refused to discuss the boundary of Sikkim and Bhutan with Tibet.

Impartial foreign observers and research scholars who have studied the two reports have come to the conclusion that the weight of evidence produced by India was much greater than that produced by China. In fact, most of India's case could be proved from the Chinese maps and the material produced by the Chinese themselves. But China disputed every treaty, every tradition and even geography. She disputed even the watersheds and stressed that it was the Karakoram Range which was the watershed between the Tarim river basin in the north and the Indus river basin in the south, whereas geography showed that it was the western Karakoram, Karakash range and Kuen Lun mountain which formed this watershed between the two systems. Indeed, the Karakash river, which had its origin north of Kuen Lun mountain and flowed into Shyok and finally into Indus, and the Chang Chenmo river, which took rise in the lakes in western Tibet and followed a similar course, were both north and east of the Karakoram range, which therefore was not the watershed. Moreover, even the Chinese-claimed line did not coincide with the lower Karakoram Range, which followed a more southernly direction. In fact, the Chinese claimed line did not follow any watershed or any range of high mountains and was arbitrarily drawn along the tops of smaller hills. The Chinese drew the boundary along a line which they had till then succeeded in bringing under their illegal occupation or which they were hoping to occupy within the next year or two before the Indian forces could be sent there. Similarly, in the Uttar Pradesh and Himachal frontier with Tibet, the watershed principle was discarded and the Chinese for the first time claimed large areas south of the Himalayan range, vastly magnifying their older claim only on small enclaves in Barahoti, Nilang, Lapsang, etc. In the eastern sector, the Chinese could not even give the correct coordinates of their line along the

foothills and only drew a vague line. This was natural because the Chinese or the Tibetans had never been there and, therefore, they would not know the exact coordinates of the line separating the foothills from the Brahmaputra valley.

The report of the Indian officials also showed that, whereas the Indians gave the correct answer to every question by the Chinese, the latter refused to give answers to a majority of the questions put by the Indian side, and whatever replies they gave were couched in vague terms. They remained quite vague about the coordinates of the lines claimed by them. This vagueness was deliberate because in the western sector, unlike in the east, the Chinese were in occupation nearly up to their claimed line and so had no difficulty in giving the coordinates. This was a clever manoeuvre so that they could go on pushing forward their boundary as they had been doing since 1954 onwards. Yet there was one good result which came out of this study. India knew clearly the weakness of the Chinese case and felt that her own case was so strong that it could stand the strictest scrutiny by any international court, and, in fact, later on, Pandit Nehru offered to refer the dispute to any international authority, including the International Court at the Hague. But this would not suit the Chinese, who wanted to settle the boundary not on legal, jurisdictional, administrative, traditional and geographical bases but purely on the basis of politics and at the point of the gun. The other result was that for the first time a thorough study had been made of the border and in India we knew clearly the coordinates of our own boundary about which we had been a little vague up till then; and, as I have mentioned earlier, this vagueness regarding the coordinates often made it difficult for the Government of India to disprove Chinese allegations that the Indian police had trespassed into Chinese territory or to press the charge of Chinese intrusion into India. The Chinese reluctance or deliberate failure to provide specific map coordinates or other description regarding a large portion of their boundary alignment was a continuing feature in all their subsequent correspondence. They invariably refrained from specifically defining the place of an alleged Indian intrusion and later argued that India

had not claimed that this area was outside Tibet.

Whilst the officials' talks were going on, China, in yet another unfriendly act against India, offered to Pakistan a pact on the boundary between Sinkiang and the Pakistan-held area of Jammu and Kashmir. All Indian objections were brushed aside. Though China had in 1956 accepted that the people of Kashmir had already expressed their will, yet when Secretary-General, R.K. Nehru, visited Peking on a self-invited tour for a parley with the Chinese leaders, they told him that the Chinese Government had never accepted without reservation the position that Kashmir was a part of India and they insisted that China had every right to deal with Pakistan to settle the boundary of the area which was under Pakistani occupation. In a subsequent agreement that was arrived at between China and Pakistan in 1962, the latter was induced to accept the position that the boundary had never been delimited, with a view to bolster China's case against India. Of course, Pakistan was only too keen to do this both to ingratiate herself with her newly found friend and also to queer India's pitch. The area in which the claims had overlapped was over 3,400 sq. miles. In the official agreement, the Chinese were left with about two-thirds of this disputed area and Pakistan with about one-third. In other words, besides grabbing nearly 12,000 sq. miles of Indian territory in North-Eastern Ladakh, China had received as gift from Pakistan another 2,000 sq. miles of territory of Jammu and Kashmir which legally belonged to India and which Pakistan had no right to part with.

In 1961, China concluded its boundary treaty with Burma and also with Nepal and, in each of these cases, China made an apparent show of generosity, though in no case did she give up an inch of territory which was under her possession but was content with taking small parts of the disputed territory which were under the occupation of Burma and Nepal but were claimed by her. So the generosity here was to the extent that whilst the Chinese held what they had occupied earlier, they were satisfied by getting back from these two small countries a part of the territory under dispute which was not under Chinese occupation. The same system was followed in Pakistan and China got away with a

major part of its claim on the ground that she was in occupation of that territory.

In rejecting India's protest against China's negotiations with Pakistan, the Chinese note said, "Anyone in the world with commonsense will ask, since the Burmese and the Nepalese Governments can settle their boundary questions with China in a friendly way through negotiations and since the Government of Pakistan had also agreed with the Chinese Government to negotiate a boundary settlement, why is it that the Indian Government cannot negotiate and settle its boundary question with the Chinese Government?" The Chinese all the time tried to demonstrate that it was India alone which was picking up a quarrel with China over the boundary, and this she was doing at the instigation of the imperialists and reactionaries, both foreign and Indian. The other aim, of course, was to force India to come to the negotiating table by refusing to accept the traditional and the treaty boundaries and even objecting to and misinterpreting the treaties entered into by the earlier Chinese Governments and then throwing open to discussion the entire 2,000 miles of the frontier. She would accept a settlement only if India agreed to leave the northeastern part of Ladakh in China's possession and also if she agreed to part with large chunks of her territory in other sections which would give China a strong foothold south of the Himalayas. In order to isolate India, China, also, during the period 1962-63, entered into a border agreement with Afghanistan and then with Outer Mongolia. She even forgot the most humiliating treatment which President Soekarno had meted to the Chinese in Indonesia, as a result of which thousands of Indonesian Chinese had been forced to leave the country, and hurriedly came to an agreement with that country on the question of the dual nationality of the Indonesia-born Chinese, conceding practically everything to Indonesia.

And, all through this period, besides keeping up a diplomatic offensive against India, the Chinese continued to churn out offensive articles against the Indian leaders and the Indian Government, openly alleging that they were the lackeys of the imperialists and they were committing aggression on the borders in order to

suppress the democratic movement in India. China also continued to pour in a good deal of tendentious literature for the edification of the fellow travellers, encouraging them to take up an attitude of hostility to the Government. She carried on a big offensive in the Afro-Asian world, and Chou En-lai made two mammoth tours to the capitals of a large number of West Asian and African countries to bring them under Chinese influence. In a conference of the Afro-Asian countries held in Cairo, China tried unsuccessfully to isolate India.

But, whilst she was carrying on this diplomatic offensive against India in the international field, she was on the point of losing her greatest ally, Russia. In the Rumanian Party Congress at Bucharest in June, 1960, the Russian and the Chinese delegates had openly clashed and used very harsh words against each other. The Second Moscow Conference of 1960 had resulted in a deep cleavage of opinion between China and Russia regarding the need of continuing the revolution and the possibility of the co-existence of capitalism and socialism. In October, 1961, Chou En-lai walked out of the 22nd Party Congress of Soviet Russia in Moscow. In the meantime, Russia had withdrawn all her technicians from China and had also refused to continue the other treaties for economic assistance and had stopped sending military aid, though the military alliance had not been revoked.

The hostility against India was apparent not only in the diplomatic field but in other practical fields also. In Tibet, China rendered the working of the Indian Trade Agencies impossible by putting severe restrictions on them and also causing difficulties in every way possible. Trade had already come to a standstill because of the unreasonable demands which the Chinese were making on the Indian merchants. Pilgrim traffic had all but stopped and the Chinese authorities even went to the ludicrous extent of stopping a Sadhu named Chaitanya, who was going to Kailash and had some Homoeopathic medicines for his own use, and alleged that this Sadhu was attempting to poison the Mansarovar Lake. In retaliation, the Indian Government was forced to impose restrictions on the Chinese Trade Agency in Kalimpong and ensure a stronger watch on the Chinese Consulates in

Calcutta and Bombay. Several Chinese residents of Calcutta and a few of Bombay were deported for anti-Indian activities and, when they refused to leave on the dates notified, they had to be forcibly pushed across the Nathu La. The Manager of China Bank had also to be served with a deportation order because of his anti-Indian activities and contacts with subversive groups in Calcutta. Successive editors of the *China Review* were arrested for scurrilous anti-Indian articles. False allegations of border intrusions and violations by Indian troops and Air Force continued to be made and, in the meantime, China went on vigorously pushing her road system into North-Eastern and Eastern Ladakh which she had forcibly occupied.

Indian public opinion continued to be highly incensed and demanded the eviction of the Chinese from Indian territory in Ladakh and also from Longju. The exchanges between the two Governments became progressively more and more acrimonious and, when the wide divergence of opinion of the official teams became known, all hopes of a peaceful settlement of the Indo-Tibetan border were abandoned and it became clear that a period of direct confrontation with China in a military sense had arrived.

Unfortunately, people who were anxious to push India headlong into a war with China did not realise the full implications of this. Pandit Nehru referred to this in a briefing which he gave us in March, 1961, and said that the border trouble with China was a very serious matter for India. He, however, deplored that in Parliament and outside many people criticised the Government for its failure to drive out the Chinese or to march its troops against them. According to him, these people forgot the facts and allowed their minds to run faster than logic and did not really appreciate or try to appreciate the result that was to follow. India, no doubt, wanted China to vacate the areas which she had occupied illegally, and India would certainly try to drive the Chinese out. But this was a big task and India had to prepare for it taking into consideration the consequences that naturally would follow. It was not wise to rush headlong and get caught in a trap. There were two approaches, the military and the political

approach. Lots of things had to be done either way. People must realise that the task of driving the Chinese out might be a fifty-year long operation. It was impossible for China to defeat India and vice versa. If India deliberately entered a war of this type, it meant starting a war which might last for generations and which might even develop into a world war or something even worse. So all aspects of the matter had to be considered before taking any steps which might escalate into war. It would be unwise to get angry and fling abuses. The Chinese incursion was a serious matter and India had to prepare for every contingency in a military way, that is of developing roads and setting up military posts all along the frontier. India might not attack the Chinese in the practical sense but her non-compromising attitude had an indirect effect which was important from the political point of view. Though the Chinese pretended to be the protectors of the oppressed masses of the world, and particularly of Asia, they had proved the falsity of their professions by their unlawful encroachments on Indian soil. India had not buckled down under Chinese pressure and this particular confrontation by India had exposed them. Politically they had damaged themselves more badly than if they were driven away a few miles from a particular place. So, whilst India should continue the political pressure and not forget that a political settlement might in the long run be better, she should go on preparing for a possible war.

Actually, steps had been taken for the implementation of the military measures which the Prime Minister mentioned. Realising that the existing resources of the States were not enough for building communications in the difficult terrain of NEFA, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Ladakh, the Government of India had set up a Border Roads Organisation in 1960 and taken up the construction of roads on a war footing.* In spite of the

*One of the main contributory causes of the delay was that the military authorities were not clear in their minds how far towards the frontier the roads should go. There was a view that a large strip of the frontier region should be left undeveloped as a sort of no-man's-land between the two countries. In this case, the no-man's-land would have been in India as the Chinese were occupying the territory right up to their claimed frontier and were bringing their roads up to it.

need to conserve the economy for the fulfilment of the Five-Year Plans, the Government of India sanctioned the expansion of the army by two infantry divisions. For improving supplies to Ladakh frontier posts, the airfields in Leh and Chushul were improved and another laid at Koyul and a number of C-119 planes were purchased from America and AN-12's from Russia. These considerably improved the carrying capacity of the Indian Air Force. Several other steps were taken to improve India's military potentiality and make it self-sufficient in the matter of armaments.

But India had another front, a more permanent and pugnacious front, that is Pakistan, to look after. The reorganised Pakistan Army, Air Force and Navy had, thanks to the munificence of the United States, greatly increased their striking power and were almost a match now for the Indian Armed Forces, which could be spared for the Pakistan front. Indeed, a great deal of the expenditure required for improving and strengthening the army was needed to maintain the Indian Army's superiority over Pakistan in arms and numbers. That alone was a big burden on India's economy. To this now was added the new danger that was looming in the north with a powerful and ruthless country with an army numbering $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions bent on grabbing large parts of Indian territory. So whilst it was easy for some people to criticise the Government and work up public feelings for alleged inaction against the Chinese, it was not all so simple. A Government, which had to look after the ultimate interests of the people, could not, as mentioned by Pandit Nehru, rush headlong into conflicts which might last for a generation and eat up all of India's resources. It was certain that Pakistan was also waiting for this much-needed opening, when she could enforce her claims with the help of the military hardware obtained from the USA. Hence it was absolutely essential for the Government of India to try to avoid a war with China by every possible means whilst at the same time preparing for the eventuality that a war might ultimately be forced upon India. Appeals for foreign aid at this stage would have been of little use. Russia had not yet snapped her alliance with China and was not likely to give mili-

tary aid to a "capitalist" country against her ally. The only other country, America, could be expected to insist that India should settle her dispute with Pakistan and this could be done only at the cost of Kashmir, a course which India would never accept. So the right policy to follow at this time was to strengthen the defences by stretching India's economy as far as possible and at the same time carry on the negotiations to bring about a political settlement of the dispute and not rush headlong into a war. And this was the policy which Pandit Nehru followed as long as it was possible.

18 China and the World: 1960-61

CHINA MADE A THOROUGH re-appraisal of the international situation in 1960-61 and came to certain conclusions which were evident from the line of action she adopted during the next few years. It would be useful to go over this for a proper understanding of the motivations and compulsions behind various policies adopted by her towards different countries during this period. The background of the world situation at this time as also the internal conditions in China have to be recalled for a proper understanding of the situation. China was passing through a period of great drought and economic distress. Before the end of 1961 a breach had taken place with Soviet Russia with the latter withdrawing Russian technicians and discontinuing economic aid. There was more than a possibility of conflicts developing in the international field in Laos with the Pathet Lao on one side supported by China and indirectly by Russia and the Phoumi group on the other supported by the United States. The war in South Vietnam had not yet escalated to the proportions which it reached after 1964. China was still apprehensive of an invasion of her mainland by Chiang Kai-shek from Taiwan. China's relations with India had deteriorated over the border issue and Chou En-lai's vitsit to Delhi in April, 1960, had not produced any significant result. China had hastily concluded treaties with Burma and Nepal and was intending to do so with Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, with regard to Burma, China felt that due to the pressure of events and in a hurry she had made a mistake in making too many concessions.* In Indonesia, the local government was carrying on a concerted drive against Chinese nationals and

* The obvious reference was to the fact that China had accepted Burma's northern border with Tibet to be along the McMahon Line as this would strengthen India's claim of that Line being the North-East frontier of India with Tibet.

several thousands of them had been driven out of that country, leaving behind everything they had acquired after decades of stay and work there; and in that connection the relationship between China and Indonesia had suffered a serious setback. The majority of the countries in the United Nations were still opposed to China's entry into that body. The United States was still the leader of the imperialist-capitalist bloc and Soviet Russia was still considered the leader of the socialist bloc while China was slowly eroding Russia's position of supremacy. China had extended her diplomatic activities in African and West Asian countries out of all proportion to her interests in those areas. China was also exhibiting great interest in the Latin American countries and in both these continents, Africa and South America, China was even attempting to export revolution. It was in this background that China assessed the gravity and the import of the various international problems that were facing her.

The first problem was that of her entry into the United Nations. China no doubt wanted to be admitted to the UN, but at the same time apprehended that if she became a member, she would lose a great deal of freedom of action which she was exercising then. Moreover, she felt that she had not suffered at all internationally by being kept out of the world body. China was aware that even if she gained entrance to the United Nations she would be in a minority there. The world situation, according to her, might superficially relax a little but in reality the struggle would become more intense and, in the bargain, China would lose her freedom of action. Though she was out of the United Nations, this had not kept her out of the Bandung Conference, which had been a great success from her point of view. During 1960-61, she had concluded friendship treaties with Cambodia, Nepal, Afghanistan, Yemen and Guinea. Border disputes had been settled with Burma and Nepal. China was successful in all these, because in these cases the United States could not exercise any pressure. China had by then established diplomatic relations with thirty nations and the United States had been unable to obstruct the process. China was adopting a policy of peaceful co-existence towards Asian, African and Latin American countries whilst maintaining

resolute opposition to America. Therefore, China felt that membership of the UN was by no means so valuable that she should make important modifications in her foreign policy in order to enter that body. If she could obtain membership without making important concessions and in a situation which would clearly enhance her prestige and damage that of the United States, she might accept the membership as a political victory in the East-West conflict; but before that she would weigh thoroughly whether this would in any way limit her freedom of action and, even if she was in the United Nations, she would try to minimise the limitations on her freedom.

China ridiculed the efforts of some countries (they included UK, Japan and India) to bridge the gap between her and the United States. She viewed these attempts with suspicion because she felt that these countries were trying to drag China into the United Nations for restricting her development. As the United States had put herself in the wrong by occupying Formosa, she must first relent, acknowledge her mistake and withdraw from Formosa and only then would China be willing to talk to her. So the first move had to come from the United States. China considered that one bad move in the world chess-board might result in the game being lost. Therefore, China must struggle hard and not make any mistakes.

China's further thinking was that, instead of relying on the goodwill of other countries, she must struggle for getting international status and prestige by her own efforts. If the imperialist policy was to hold a position through strength, China's policy was to hold a position through revolutionary strength. Therefore, China would use revolution to oppose anti-revolutionary measures taken by imperialism. Because of the internal solidarity of China, her great internal development and skilful foreign policy, the international status of China was very high. In order to get international recognition she might make concessions to the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, but it was not necessary for her to cultivate any relations with the western countries and she must avoid giving an impression that she wanted to woo them as this might detract from her revolutionary strength. Ridiculing

British and Russian arguments that if China could restrain her language she could win more votes in the United Nations, she felt that she must continue her revolutionary posture and avoid seeking any advantage at the cost of revolutionary purity.

In summing up China's attitude towards the United Nations, it was, therefore, clear that China felt that she was in no way inconvenienced by being kept out of that body. On the other hand, by remaining outside she had certain definite advantages for manoeuvres. She did not want to lose that flexibility. She was no longer bothered about votes for or against her in the United Nations. She would consent to become a member on her own terms when she was convinced that this membership would leave her with complete initiative in the socialist revolution she was seeking to bring about in the world as a counterpoise against American imperialism.

With regard to Laos, China considered it to be of strategic importance in view of the fact that the United States was trying to use it to prevent China's influence expanding in South-East Asia and hoped to use it as a base from which to attack China. But the situation favoured China, because Laos had her back on China and North Vietnam and this geographical position helped the Pathet Lao to grow strong, and Cambodia was neutral in this quarrel. China's close relationship with the Pathet Lao would be kept secret to give the impression that the Pathet Lao movement was an indigenous movement growing out of the soil. China was quite clear in her mind that there could be no stability in Laos short of an outright Communist victory. The United States was expected to support the rightist groups even though this might violate international agreements, but China would oppose the United States in every way possible and would concentrate on creating conditions in which the Pathet Lao would continue to develop; and, once the Pathet Lao had developed sufficient strength, it would be in a position to take over the country. At that stage intervention by the United States would be of little use. China felt that a rapid solution of the Laos problem was unlikely and the Chinese policy should be one

of long-term assistance for the development of the Pathet Lao.*

With regard to Soviet Russia, though differences between these two big stalwarts of the socialist world had come to the surface during the previous two years, China was still willing to acknowledge Soviet Russia's leadership whilst retaining her own doctrines on Socialist revolution. China would go on arguing with Soviet Russia and with the other Socialist countries about the wrong policies which Soviet Russia was following, but she would not make an open breach with that country yet. China still required Russia's support for her fight against imperialism and she hoped to carry Russia along with her by continually nagging her to take up position against imperialism and pointing out how her wrong policy was having the reverse effect. China questioned Russia's line of thinking on peaceful coexistence and also her attitude towards anti-colonial movements or wars of national liberation. China also was in disagreement with Russia about the need for peace in Laos. Though China had started suffering from acute shortage of military vehicles and equipment, she still hoped that relations with Russia would improve to allow the latter to renew her supply of military hardware.

Regarding the African and Latin American countries, China considered that she was the leader in the world in respect of national liberation movements and had the greatest experience in combining politics and military strategy to win her aims. Indeed, she would prefer politics to military strategy and there was no indication at this time that China was planning direct military intervention in the newly developing countries of Africa and Latin America. But China felt that it was her bounden duty as the leader of the revolution to foster conditions in all these countries which would bring about a state of revolution and which would ultimately see the end of American imperialism. She was satisfied at that time that such a situation had already developed in

*The Chinese later built a road linking Yunan with the territory occupied by the Pathet Lao and further extended it almost up to the borders of Thailand menacing that country also. This shows how she had been carrying out her long-term plans of bringing the whole of South-East Asia within her orbit.

Tanzania and Congo and hoped that other countries would also follow suit. The reason why Chou En-lai made extensive visits to Africa in 1961-62 was that China considered at that time that Africa was the main front in the struggle between East and West and in the anti-colonial movement and many of these countries were looking towards China for inspiration. In this respect China considered that the anti-colonial movement was most complicated. In addition to the various forms of colonialism in vogue, other aspects which complicated matters were the offers of good offices by the United States by deploying her military forces, Nehru's non-aggressionism, Tito's peaceful neutralism and further conflicting ideas put forth by Nasser, Nkruma, Bourguiba and others. In this confusing situation China felt that she must teach Africa the truth about colonialism and the lessons of the Chinese revolution.

As regards the United States, China at this time considered that war with the United States was possible, though it would be a mad act on the part of the latter. At this time America did have all the nuclear weapons and China had none. Bereft of Russian support, China would have to fight the United States nuclear attack literally with bare hands. This position of China's inferiority in nuclear arms would last for about five years. Therefore, China would do her best, during this period, to avoid an all-out war with the United States. But, China, though shrinking from a total or nuclear war, was not averse to local wars, particularly on the border areas, if these could be quickly ended and did not bring in American reprisals in a very big way. Actually, there might be situations on the border in which China might find it profitable to indulge in a quick war to forestall massive American intervention.

From India's point of view, though it was important to consider how these policies affected the world situation, China's thinking about India at this time was of the greater concern. The attitude taken by the Chinese during the officials' discussions had already indicated that on the border issue China was uncompromising. She wanted to hold North-East Ladakh and then strike a hard bargain with India regarding the rest of the frontier,

including large areas of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and the whole of NEFA, and it was quite clear that she wanted to force India out from the high crest of the Himalayas and get a foothold and make her presence felt on the southern slopes. But, in her opinion, India's intransigent attitude showed that India was not willing to oblige China in this game. So China had to utilise both political and military tactics to achieve that aim. There was clear evidence that towards the end of 1960 China briefed some prominent Indian Communists about the India-China dispute. Chou En-lai told these Communist leaders that, as Nehru was fast going under the influence of American imperialism, he was not willing to come to terms with China. Chou En-lai criticised the Indian officers who had come to Peking to study China's material on the border and also made a false complaint that the Chinese team had received insulting treatment at Delhi. He alleged that Pandit Nehru was aiming to re-establish the Dalai Lama in his old position and that was why the Chinese Government had earlier refused him permission to visit Tibet. India had raised a false cry that the Chinese military patrols had violated the NEFA border, though he had given clear instructions that no Chinese patrols should penetrate into India. Therefore, border violation by the Chinese was a false propaganda by Nehru against China. He further said that Nehru would not settle the border question because he wanted to placate his imperialist colleagues and because the economic leap forward of the Chinese was bound to draw the attention of the Indian people to her peace aims. Here Chou En-lai was clearly giving talking points to the Indian Communist leaders to enable them to carry on propaganda against the Government of India which, they would allege, was following an imperialist policy and was raising the bogey of Chinese menace in order to keep the people of India under economic bondage.

China at this time also realised that though her troops were vastly experienced in all forms of warfare, defensive, offensive and guerrilla, in the plains, in the hill areas, in forests and even in deserts and river beds, they had no real experience of fighting in the plateau of Tibet with an average height of twelve to four-

teen thousand feet, where the wear and tear of the human element by difficult climatic conditions was very great and where there were great logistic difficulties and even difficulties of communication. The Chinese Army Headquarters at this time prepared a special treatise on plateau warfare which went in great detail into every aspect of plateau warfare, offensive actions, reconnaissance, communications and even envisaged invasion by foreign armies inside Tibet and how to thwart such invasions. This document also gave instructions how to carry out offensive operations into neighbouring areas where conditions similar to those in Tibet prevailed. It was quite clear from this document that China at this time was preparing and training her troops not only for defence against foreign aggression in Tibet but also for taking offensive action into the bordering areas of India, where conditions were similar to those in Tibet. Such conditions prevailed in the whole of Ladakh, in about a 100-mile belt of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, about a 50-mile belt of Uttar Pradesh and a 50- to 60-mile belt in NEFA and in Sikkim and Bhutan. A side issue of this study was to consider all Tibetans as potential enemies. This was in marked contrast to normal Chinese thinking that the People's Liberation Army must be the friends of the peasants and the local population from whom they must secure hundred per cent support. This classification of all Tibetans as potential enemies clearly showed that despite incessant Chinese propaganda introducing the much vaunted reforms in Tibet, the latter looked upon the Chinese as usurpers of their independence, and, therefore, had no sympathy with them. Another side issue of great importance was that the Chinese made a special exception in case of the border with Nepal. They laid down that there would be no Chinese post within 25 kilometres of the border. They were extremely anxious to avoid clashes with Nepali troops and even clashes with the Tibetan guerrillas so close to Nepal as to arouse alarm in that country. This was a part of the policy of isolating India by ostentatious friendliness to India's acquiescent neighbours.

Chinese troops, in their subsequent engagements with Indian troops in 1962, closely followed the tactical principles laid down in

the treatise on plateau warfare. For example, the tactics of prior infiltration to cause confusion to the enemy, occupation of the high hills surrounding enemy positions, striking hard with tremendous power at one single point to achieve a break-through keeping the other fronts of the enemy immobilised, and then surround the enemy from all sides, pursue the retreating enemy relentlessly to destroy it completely, maintaining lines of communication right to the front, were all meticulously and successfully observed. Even regarding defensive positions, the Chinese Headquarters had drawn up models of the checkposts, how they were to be sited, how defence fortifications were to be constructed and how inter-communicating tunnels were to be prepared and had stressed that every post was to be defended to the last man so that, even if the enemy forces succeeded in overcoming the resistance of any particular post, their losses would be so great and the effort so heavy that they would be reluctant to follow up with their advance.

The Chinese apprehended at this time the possibility of an American invasion of the Chinese mainland. Lin Piao, the Defence Minister and the Head of the Chinese Army, had introduced a new thought about fighting against an army which was numerically inferior but vastly superior in arms. He laid down that there were two types of warfare, long range and short range. Long range warfare was conducted through bombing, long range artillery and missiles and nuclear and biological attacks. In this respect China was weak and there was no prospect that China would be able to make up this deficiency within five years. Therefore, China must concentrate on the conventional short-range fighting, because, without the short-range fighting, long-range fighting by itself could not consolidate the gains. In the short-range fighting, weapon power could easily be matched by the human element; and, if America had the larger fire power, China had the greater man-power; and she had exhibited in Korea that she could swamp the United States' fire power by her man-power. Moreover, it was the man behind the machine which really counted in the ultimate end, and in close fighting the bayonet, the rifle and the mortar were all that would count and greater

fire power really became of secondary importance, because it could not be applied. He also laid down that this strength in close fighting came not only from one's proficiency in the handling of the weapons, which of course one must possess, and the use of the tactics suited to these weapons, but also political training and indoctrination which went behind this training. Acting according to these directions, the Chinese Military High Command proceeded to train the army to improve its efficiency in close fighting tactics; and it was this close fighting tactics which was followed throughout the fighting which later broke out in October-November, 1962, between the Chinese and the Indian forces and in which the training and motivation of the Chinese troops did ultimately prevail.

By the beginning of 1962, China was thinking of the possibility of a triple attack by Taiwan in the East, by the USA through Korea and Vietnam and by India through Tibet. China's own economic position at this time was very difficult and she felt that, though she would be able to defeat an invasion from Taiwan, it would cause her a great deal of difficulty in the economic field. Moreover, the large-scale exodus to Hong Kong occurring at this time showed that the morale of the people due to shortages of food and other commodities was very low. Therefore, China apprehended that Taiwan might be able to get a great deal of support from the local people. She then visualised a joint effort by Taiwan from the east and India from the south and apprehended that in such a case China's position would be extremely difficult, though she might yet be able to beat off both these invasions. Her economic position would then become still worse and she might even face an outright rebellion in Tibet. This might even have repercussions in other areas like Sinkiang where there were strong national minorities. In case of a triple attack, that is by Taiwan from the east, India from the south and America from Korea and Vietnam, China apprehended that her position would be critical. Excepting in case of an attack from Taiwan, China was not expecting to get any direct Soviet assistance in the other two contingencies. So it was clear that by the middle of 1962, China was preparing to fight a war forced on her by Taiwan,

India and America in collaboration with each other, even though there was no question of any such collaboration between these countries at that time or even later.

China considered that by the end of 1961 the anti-Chinese movements of the reactionary cliques in India and Indonesia had already been blunted, but she must guard against their recurrence especially in India. In the international field, the anti-Chinese wave had risen to unprecedented heights in 1960 with attacks mounted by the USSR, India, Indonesia and the United States and the Chinese had to fight back simultaneously on all the four fronts. The Chinese felt that they had followed the correct tactics and conducted a series of struggles and obtained important victories. Chou En-lai took the initiative to go to Delhi to negotiate with Nehru and expose the refusal of the Indian ruling class to settle the border dispute peacefully. In this diplomatic struggle between China and India the initiative remained in Chinese hands and thus China felt that she had foiled the anti-Chinese intrigue of India and had consolidated and expanded China's international position and elevated her international prestige. Imperialism and the various reactionary cliques in every country were frustrated.

Following Chairman Mao's instructions to keep the whole before one's mind and then manoeuvre with parts, China decided that her main sword should still be aimed at American imperialism and round this should revolve her general strategy. Though in the first half of 1960, China had pursued an all-out counter-attack against the anti-Chinese offensive by India, in the global context the struggle against India was made subordinate to that against world imperialism. Again, in the case of Indonesia, China's struggle against her was relegated to a second position when the struggle against India came to the forefront and China even refrained from attacking the reactionary clique in Indonesia.* Similarly, when the Sino-Indian trouble broke out, further measures were taken, and, when the Sino-Soviet relations

* The obvious reference is to China meekly surrendering to Indonesia when the latter turned out of the country thousands of Indonesia-born Chinese after forfeiting all their properties.

became tense, the struggle against India was soft-pedalled. So in the diplomatic struggle, China was of the view that principle and flexibility should be handled adroitly. With India, China's policy should be one of struggle and unity. The example was given that when India started the anti-Chinese movement, China opposed this with determination. Then Chou En-lai went to New Delhi to negotiate with Nehru and thus a border clash was avoided and the relations between the two countries calmed down. This showed how principle and flexibility could be combined.

Again, following Chairman Mao's instruction that in taking the first step the following step should also be considered, China had relegated her quarrel with Indonesia to the second place. The struggle against Nehru was beneficial to China's relations with Indonesia because of Soekarno's jealousy against Nehru and in that struggle Soekarno was never attacked personally but only the reactionaries. For the future, whilst continuing the counter-attack against the anti-Chinese activities of India's reactionary clique, friendly relations with Burma, Nepal, Afghanistan, Cambodia and other countries would continue to be strengthened. An early signing of a border agreement with Nepal would be striven for. Similarly the signing of a treaty of dual nationality for overseas Chinese with Cambodia would also be attempted. A good job in economic aid would be performed in Burma, Nepal and Cambodia. The Kings of Afghanistan, Nepal and Cambodia would be invited to visit China and thereby cultivated. A reasonable settlement of the problems regarding the choice of nationality and residence of overseas Chinese in Indonesia would be attempted. Friendly relations would be developed with Ceylon. Every attempt would be made to put India in a defensive position on the border issue. Nehru might again be invited to visit China at an opportune moment. A border conference would be called again, but at the same time China would be prepared for another anti-Chinese wave to be started by the Indian Government. The Sino-Indian Trade Agreement, which was due to expire, would be revised. China would also strive for an appropriate improvement of relationship with Pakistan and the border problem with Pakistan

would be settled when the conditions were ripe for doing so.

It seems that China successfully followed the policy guidelines which the Central Committee had laid down following Mao Tse-tung's strategy of combining principle with flexibility and considering the second step before taking the first and the Chinese generally succeeded except that she failed to entrap India. Pandit Nehru did not go to China, nor was the trade agreement renewed. But with other countries China was able to create the impression of reasonableness and with Nepal of sweet reasonableness. China had also made up her mind at this time to cultivate Pakistan at any cost and to support her in every way possible against India forcing the latter to look after two fronts simultaneously. The overall tactics which China was following at this time was to keep the United States at arm's length by causing as little provocation to her as possible and also by making one single condition for restoring peace with the United States which would be dependent on the United States leaving Taiwan. China knew that internationally the position of the United States in Taiwan was weak and therefore on this issue diplomatically the United States was on the defensive. Thus, forcing the United States on the defensive, China would take on the neighbouring countries one by one and force them to fall in step with China either by persuasion or by offering tempting concessions or by cajoling and threats and gradually wean them away from Indian influence. China realised that so long as India maintained her democratic form of government and upheld human liberties, it would be impossible for China to bring about in the countries of Asia and Africa conditions of Socialist revolution, which was her ultimate prescription for the whole world. Had not Lenin declared that India was the hub round which South and West Asia turned? And, now, it was not only South and West Asia but the whole of Africa also that turned on the same hub. Therefore, the aim was to denigrate India and lower her predominant position in the non-Communist world of Asia and Africa, and also to continue to try to separate the Indian "reactionary clique" from the people so that a Socialist revolution could be brought about in that country also. China realised that whatever she might be

able to do in these other countries, so long as she could not force India to change her way of life and make her conform to the Chinese way, there would be little chance of any of the Asian and African countries falling in step with China however much they professed friendship with her. India came in her way in the attainment of her designs and India must be subdued and this thorn in her side must be removed. And if India succeeded, then all hopes of China to bring about a Socialist revolution would be dashed to the ground.

Thanks to the far-seeing policies followed by Pandit Nehru, in spite of the tremendous offensive which China mounted in all the Asian and African countries, the gains made by her were only marginal and temporary and were largely wasted away within a few years in Africa and she had not succeeded to any great extent in Asia either. The only country where she succeeded was Pakistan, for reasons which were quite different. Pakistan's hatred and inborn enmity towards India found ready support in China's hostility to India, and Pakistan found that, whereas the rest of the world would not support her in any aggressive action against India, she would get that support from China. The latter also found that so long as India had to look after two fronts she would not be able to muster any great force to endanger China. In this common hostility against India, all high-sounding Socialist principles were thrown to the winds and Pakistan and China became close allies in their brigandage against India.

There was no doubt that China at this time was passing through great economic difficulties in the agricultural field due to three successive droughts and also in the industrial field because of the withdrawal of Russian support and also shortage of industrial raw material due to a fall in agricultural production. The morale of the people at large was low, though there was no indication to show that there was any loss of morale amongst the leadership. The chronic shortage of food had developed into a serious law and order situation in many provinces and the large-scale evacuation of Chinese to Hong Kong and Macao confirmed this. Actually, there were clear indications that this had affected even the

army morale for two reasons. The families of the soldiers in their villages were suffering tremendous hardships and also there were shortages in the supplies in the army itself, which had led to malnutrition of about five per cent of the troops, which was a large percentage by any standard. The state of arms was also not good and, though China was self-sufficient in practically all kinds of small arms, she had much shortage in military vehicles and particularly gasoline and lubricating oils. Many transport vehicles had been converted to charcoal burners due to this shortage. China tried to make up for her shortage in armament by political indoctrination and the greater the economic difficulties the more intensive became the political training. After all, it was the man behind the machine or the weapon which was the more important factor. And to keep up this stress on politics, even in these very difficult times, China never gave up her aggressive posture or preparations not only for carrying revolution to all other countries but also for limited warfare in the neighbouring countries. Chou En-lai made lavish promises of economic aid to many of the African countries, promises which could not be fulfilled and were never fulfilled.

These shortages would no doubt seriously impede any war effort over a long period as would be necessitated in case of a resolute Taiwanese or American invasion of the Chinese mainland. But the shortages were spread over the whole of the Chinese army. They could be easily made up for a smaller force and would not be apparent in case of a limited offensive action taken by 8 to 10 Divisions of the army, which could be fully equipped with all the requirements in small arms. Moreover, the Chinese army in Tibet had been well-stocked over the years as the Chinese always apprehended that at some stage or the other the communications between Lhasa and Sining might be interrupted and so had laid large stocks of arms and ammunition and other non-destructible stores required for the troops. Hence there was no fear of any immediate shortages affecting limited Chinese offensive action across the border, though she would be clearly incapable at this time of waging a long-drawn-out war with very extended lines of communication.

When seen against this background of the conditions in China and the line of Chinese thinking, many of the Chinese moves made in October-November, 1962, which looked inexplicable at that time, could be easily comprehended.

That Prime Minister Nehru was also thinking on these lines was apparent from the briefing he gave us in the first quarter of 1961. Referring to the differences that had arisen between India and China and the attempt that China was making all over Asia and Africa to isolate India and put her on the defensive, he said that India must develop economically and industrially because very serious strains would show up in the economy in case a war broke out and India must develop sufficiently in peace time to be able to sustain herself in war. While pointing out that India was going through many difficulties regarding her Plans, which were not astonishing, he said that China also was in difficulty about its exploding population, shortage of food and shortage of gasoline and many other industrial commodities. Internationally Russia was no longer cooperating with China and this was not only affecting the Chinese war machine but the entire Chinese industry and economy. All these factors were important because India should know whether China was very strong or relatively less strong or weak. In this context he ridiculed those people who constantly shouted and urged the Government to take immediate action against the Chinese on the frontier. According to Pandit Nehru, they talked in such a way as would make people believe that this was a simple operation whilst it was just the contrary. Any military campaign in the frontier was fraught with grave risks because of the very difficult nature of the terrain. So one had to be prepared for every contingency. One no doubt had to take risks in a war, but not in such a light-hearted manner. Referring to the famous Sanskrit play, *Mudrārākshasa*, he said that one had to be clear about one's objectives in waging a war. Otherwise, even though victory might be won, the aim would be lost. So, while not ruling out the possibility of a war, he said that a war with China should be avoided if that was possible, because the consequences of such a war would be very far-reaching.

Pandit] Nehru further said that he was not afraid of China being

a big power, because if India had her difficulties, so had China. If China had 600 million people, India had 450. It was difficult for China to bring large armies across the Himalayas against India and the deeper they came into India, their difficulties would multiply. Similar would be the position if India went into the Chinese-occupied territory. So a war between India and China would not easily end. Neither China nor India was going to be easily defeated and a war would mean a long-term war, which would eat up all the resources and prevent their application to national development. So all objectives which India had set for herself would be lost. Moreover, a war between India and China was almost certainly likely to develop into a world war and nobody could foretell what would be the result of such a world war except that it would end in utter destruction. Pandit Nehru, therefore, considered that there should not be any loose talk about war, but responsible people should think and weigh the matter properly not for any love of China but simply for avoiding widespread, far-reaching and unseen consequences. India, however, had to be prepared for a war whether a war came in the near future or not. Lack of preparedness would indicate weakness, and if India was weak, other countries would not pay any heed to her. But whilst preparing militarily, India, at the same time, should pursue other methods to contain China's ambitions.

In this connection, Pandit Nehru mentioned the major development that had occurred in the relationship between Russia and China. It was a basic conflict and hence of great significance. There was very little of ideology in it. The conflict was between the national interests of the these great countries. In this context it was very helpful to India to have friendly relations with Russia, because, of all countries in the world, only Russia could prove to be useful to India by its policy in regard to the Sino-Indian dispute. America was powerful and could help India with arms, aircraft, etc. in the eventuality of having a war. But America was in no position to help India diplomatically against China. On the other hand, though an ally of China, Russia's apparent neutrality in the India-China dispute was definitely in India's favour politically.

19 The Forward Policy

THERE WAS NO DOUBT that Pandit Nehru was thinking ahead and taking a broad view of all the contingencies that might arise. His talk set us on the task of making a special assessment of China's strength and weakness as a result of the economic difficulties she was facing in consequence of three successive droughts and the withdrawal of Russian economic help. Delving deep into the papers which gave an insight into the Chinese foreign policy as well as military strategy, we came to the conclusion that though there were some basic weaknesses in the Chinese military position, that would affect China only in case of a war with a very powerful country with a modernised Army and Air Force like the United States or the Soviet Union. The shortages which Lin Piao had talked of would not handicap China in a war against India, particularly in a short war, which was all that was apprehended on the frontier at that time. China had made enough stockpiling in bases all over Tibet as well as in the frontier areas to be able to carry on a war of even a couple of months' duration without having to depend too much on supplies from the mainland. Her army in Tibet was well conditioned and her communication system to the frontier was good and, as she had sufficient strength required in Tibet itself, she was in a position to attack India at a place of her own choice, particularly because the offensive would lie in her hands. We communicated the result of this analysis to the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister who agreed with our conclusions. But the Army Headquarters took a different view and held that China did not have the capacity to maintain more than five Divisions in Tibet in peacetime and not more than two Divisions during operations. Even these units would be poorly equipped and did not constitute any real danger to India's security. Thus ensued a disagreement between Intel-

ligence and the Army Headquarters, the latter holding that the IB was exaggerating the threat and the IB feeling that the Army Headquarters was discarding irrefutable evidence and deliberately underestimating the danger. This difference remained unresolved till 1961 when Kaul came as the CGS. Unfortunately, there was then no independent JIC which could weigh impartially the evidence available. Our representative often came back from the JIC meetings quite desperate. He had been asked to strike at a compromise figure, e.g., as the IB said that there were seven Divisions and the Army Headquarters considered that there were four, the latter was willing to increase the figure to five and no more and the IB should agree. It was preposterous even to think that intelligence estimates could be done that way. This was the main reason why, even when the Government woke up to the danger of a Chinese military threat, the Army Headquarters continued to hold on to the beliefs of the mid-fifties and was slow to devise strategy and tactics to suit the situation and meet the threat as and where it developed. Both Mankekar and Khera have commented on this and even Kaul has admitted this lacuna.

In Chapter 15, I have explained how, after the shooting by the Chinese of the Indian policemen near Kongka La on October 21, 1959, all forward patrolling by the armed police units of the Intelligence Bureau and the Assam Rifles was stopped and these were placed under the direct command of the Army. And, as the Army itself was not in a position immediately to take over this additional commitment by sending more troops to the frontier, the transfer of the responsibility of protecting the frontier to the Army remained by and large an arrangement on paper. The police and the Assam Rifles units continued to remain on the frontier, but all forward patrolling was stopped. The Chinese had, after the Kongka La incident, announced that they were also stopping their forward patrols to avoid clashes and had even offered to withdraw 20 kilometres from their existing positions, but, in actual fact, it was soon found that the Chinese were making full use of the opportunity created by the withdrawal of Indian patrols and continued incursions further into Indian territory not only in Ladakh but also in the other

parts of the frontier. And, true to his game, Chou En-lai, during his talks with Prime Minister Nehru in Delhi in April, 1960, produced a map in which the boundary line in Ladakh had been pushed further westward and southward as compared to the 1956 line, which he had claimed as China's boundary after the 1959 incident. I have also mentioned in Chapter 16 that though Prime Minister Nehru had enquired from Chou En-lai whether the Chinese were building another road from Haji Langar to Shamul Lungpa, the latter had denied any knowledge. It would be naive to believe that this was being done without his authority. The Chinese were following their usual tactics of trying to lull India's suspicions by making most reasonable-looking offers but only to violate them at their will.

In May, 1960, we reported to the Government the evidence that we had found of continued Chinese activities of reconnaissance, probing, surveys and road-building much beyond the line claimed by them in 1956. We mentioned that by December, 1959, the Chinese had not only cleared a track for a motorable road from Lanak La to Kongka La but also had done the same along the dry bed of the Karakash river from Qarateg in the north to Shamul Lungpa in the south to complete their circular road. By February, 1960, they had also linked Kongka La with Shamul Lungpa by a mountain track and had thus established a line of control along Qarateg, Shamul Lungpa and Lanak La. (This is the road about which Pandit Nehru had made an enquiry from Chou En-lai.) At this time the Chinese had not occupied the area south of Kongka La and Lanak La up to Khurnak Fort, that is between Chang Chenmo Valley and Pangong Lake, though they had sent patrols into this area and had been observed making surveys. We concluded that it was their intention to occupy this large pastureland, which was the most valuable pastureland in Eastern Tibet, feeding the cattle of Chusul, Phobrang, Tsogtsalu, etc. Though on December 17, 1959, Chou En-lai in his letter to Prime Minister Nehru had said that the Chinese map published in 1956 correctly showed the traditional boundary between the two countries in the Ladakh sector (because up to the end of 1959 the Chinese had occupied approximately

up to the 1956 line), it was clear that they were now trying to push this line further westward.

The Government were already alarmed at the uncompromising attitude displayed by the Chinese Prime Minister during his visit to Delhi and apprehended that China was preparing for a showdown. So the Defence Minister reacted strongly on receiving this report and on May 26 held a meeting which was attended by the Chief of Army Staff and the Foreign and the Defence Secretaries and myself. He directed that new posts should be established to protect Indian territory from further intrusion by Chinese troops and suggested that these posts should be established at Nyingri, Dambu Guru and Nyagzu in the central sector in the area between Chang Chenmo river valley and Pangong Lake. As in the northern sector it was not clear whether the Chinese had already established themselves south of Karakoram, it was decided to send reconnaissance parties from Murgo and open posts at Qizil Langar and Daulat Beg Oldi. It was also decided that the possibility of patrolling eastward from Daulat Beg Oldi should be explored with the object of occupying the Depsang Plains and the Chip Chap river bed if the Chinese had not till then spilled into these areas. In the southern sector also, the possibility of establishing additional posts west of the line running from Chushul to Demchok via Rezang La and Chang La, which was the international line according to Indian maps, was also to be considered. We soon established our Daulat Beg Oldi Intelligence post and carried out intelligence operations from there. But due to the want of sufficient build up at Leh and suitable road communications, the Army was not yet in a position to open the other posts recommended by the Defence Minister.

In September, 1960, we sent another report of widespread Chinese activities all along the frontier in Tibet and of many instances of fresh intrusions. We also mentioned that new Chinese activities had been noticed in the area bordering South-East Ladakh, which had remained quiet till then. In November, 1960, we again reported that the Chinese had consolidated their position in Eastern Ladakh along the line running north to east and then to south through Shamul Lungpa, Kongka La, Kyrmgo

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Traggar, Dambu Guru, Khurnak Fort and Spanggur. They had also constructed a mountain track from Shamul Lungpa to Lanak La and had connected Lanak La with Rudok in the east, thus nearly completing their circular road across the Aksai Chin and Lingzi Tang, though all sections of the road were not yet fit to take heavy traffic. Nyingri had also been linked with Kyrmgo Traggar and Kongka La to Rudok. A road from Nyingri to Nyagzu via Chungang La and Spanggur was contemplated. The construction of a road from Rudok to Spanggur had been taken in hand and the survey of the Rudok-Khurnak Fort road had also been completed. From the Chinese activities west of the circular road it was also clear that the Chinese were making preparations to make a further thrust westward along the flat Chip Chap river valley. From frequent intrusions noticed in the large pastures lying between Chang Chenmo river in the north and Spanggur Lake in the south it was apparent that they were making preparations to occupy the same. In order to stop further intrusions of the Chinese west of the circular road, we suggested that we should set up posts at Burtsa, Qizil Langar and the Track Junction north of Murgo on the route to Daulat Beg Oldi and the Karakoram Pass. Having established these posts we should move as far eastward as possible to come to the vicinity of the Chinese circular road to prevent their filling the gap towards the west. For this purpose it was necessary to have a strong army unit at Daulat Beg Oldi. To prevent the occupation of the area between Chang Chenmo and Spanggur we suggested that we should send our troops into this area immediately and set up posts at Nyingri and Dambu Guru. We also reported that the Chinese in order to get a better terrain for their Shamul Lungpa-Kongka La Road, were trying to encroach into Indian territory near Hot Springs even beyond the line which the Chinese had claimed in 1956. We suggested that, in order to prevent this, the Indian post at Hot Springs should be strengthened and regular patrols should be sent out by this post up to the frontier claimed by the Chinese according to their 1956 maps. We contended that though this might lead to clashes between the respective patrols, yet this was necessary to safeguard India's position. We also

suggested that a diplomatic protest be lodged.

The Defence Minister immediately held a meeting to discuss this new threat. The COAS, the CGS as well as the Foreign and the Defence Secretaries and myself were present. The Defence Minister said that everything possible should be done to prevent the Chinese encroaching further westward of their circular road as well as into the pastureland south of the Chang Chenmo river. The Chinese should also not be allowed to come into our territory near Hot Springs to facilitate their road construction. As a result of this discussion our Hot Springs Post was strengthened by putting a unit of the army there. This effectively prevented the Chinese from encroaching into our territory in this particular area and they confined their road to within their 1956 line. We opened Intelligence Posts at Zarsar in South-East Ladakh and at Qizil Langar between Murgo and Daulat Beg Oldi. On this road the Army also opened a post at Sultan Chusko, about ten miles south of Murgo. To observe the Chinese activities in the pastureland south of the Chang Chenmo river, the Army, with the assistance of the Intelligence Bureau, opened a post of Phutsang La, but this post had to be abandoned during the winter. The Army was not yet in a position to take on any more commitments. So the year 1960 ended with our having nearly secured our claimed frontier in South-East Ladakh, which was the only inhabited area in the frontier regions of this territory. The Chinese had encroached a little in the Middle Sector between Chushul and Lanak La, but there were nearly 500 sq. miles of unoccupied territory in this region which neither Indian nor Chinese troops had till then occupied. In the North-East Sector, the Chinese had already occupied nearly 7,000 sq. miles of our territory, which was bereft of any habitation or vegetation; but between the Chinese and the Indian-occupied lines there existed nearly 3,000 sq. miles more of the same type of territory which was occupied by neither.

During the officials' talks in 1960, the Chinese had put forward a new map claiming their boundary much further to the west of the 1956 border. They attempted to explain this by arguing that it involved only minor adjustments of the 1956 border, whilst in fact, as pointed out by the Indian team, the changes were sub-

stantial and involved nearly 3,000 sq. miles of new territory. We also noticed that, since the beginning of 1961, the Chinese had started patrolling right up to the new boundary line, which they had claimed during the officials' meeting, obviously with a view to justify their claims on the ground that they were in actual occupation of this territory. After the failure of the officials' talks and as soon as the weather improved, from May, 1961, onwards, frequent Chinese intrusions into our territory, practically all over the frontier in Ladakh and further road-building up to our frontiers in NEFA and the central sector and also opposite Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal and road-building inside North-East Ladakh up to their claimed line in 1960, came to our notice.

In March, 1961, a wind of change had come over the Army Headquarters. Thapar had taken over as the COAS and Kaul as the CGS. Both showed much alertness regarding the frontier situation and were also responsive to the strong feelings in the country against making any more concessions to the Chinese. The result of this change was that immediately a more resolute handling of the frontier situation became evident. This change from the negative attitude we had encountered so far was naturally most welcome to us. In the summer of 1961, the Intelligence post at Daulat Beg Oldi was reinforced by an army platoon which was subsequently raised to a company strength. Army units were also posted at the subsidiary posts at Burtsa, Qizil Langar and the Track Junction between Daulat Beg Oldi and Murgo. Some were held by the Army and some by the Intelligence Bureau, and there was full cooperation between the two. The army also opened new posts at Chang La and Charding La to protect the two sides of Demchok. We further strengthened our posts at Hanle and Zarsar and opened a new post almost right on the frontier at Chumar to protect the south-eastern end of Ladakh. There were frequent consultations between the Army Headquarters and the IB and all new posts were opened either by the Army or the IB or jointly only after consultation and weighing fully the repercussions. Kaul undertook difficult tours to the northern frontier to acquaint himself personally with the situation and the difficulties of our troops. However, our rate of filling

the existing gaps was still much slower than that of the Chinese. Our physical difficulties were much greater. Moreover, though the Army Headquarters by now had woken up to the adverse consequences of the past inactivity, the field commanders had not yet shed their diffidence and were reluctant to move forward at the pace which was necessary and had to be prodded by the CGS to do so.

In September, 1961, we prepared another note on the problems of frontier security and suggested that in Northern Ladakh we should reconnoitre the Galwan River Valley and open posts as far eastward as possible, because this valley was connected with the Shyok valley through which the Shyok River ran and finally joined the Indus in Pakistan-held territory. If the Chinese commanded the Galwan valley, it would give them easy access to Skardu, Gilgit, etc. and our routes to Murgo, Daulat Beg Oldi, Panamik would be cut. We again strongly recommended that the unoccupied area between the Pangong and Spanggur Lakes should be reconnoitred and new posts established, and that the pasturelands between Chang Chenmo and Spanggur should also be immediately occupied. We suggested that patrols should be sent from Demchok and small posts opened on the hill tops right at the border. We suggested that the position of the posts in the disputed areas of Uttar Pradesh should be further examined to prevent the Chinese occupying these areas surreptitiously and, unlike the then current practice of the Indian posts withdrawing during the winter, these posts should be manned throughout the winter, though the strength might be reduced.

So we were surprised and alarmed when, in spite of this report, the same month we received a written note from the Army Headquarters asking us to withdraw our posts from Daulat Beg Oldi, Qizil Langar, etc. north of Murgo on the ground that the army posts were also going to be withdrawn as the Army was finding it difficult to maintain supplies and would be unable to do so during the winter. We discussed the serious implications of this proposed move with the Army Headquarters, but the latter insisted that the posts had to be withdrawn. We then said that even if the Army withdrew its posts, the IB posts would remain

at these places even though armed protection would not be available. When the Army refused to shoulder the responsibility even of the very limited supplies required by our small staff, we undertook to maintain the supplies with the help of our mule transport, of which we had acquired a sizable strength by then in Ladakh. In order to do the stocking for the winter we immediately activised this mule transport from Leh over the Khardung La to Panamik and then via the Sasser Pass to Murgo and further north. It was a long and difficult route but there was no alternative, because sufficient stocks had to be laid for the winter at these posts to last till next May when only the passes would again open. However, we were saved the trouble of continuing this method of supply, because in October, 1961, both the Daulat Beg Oldi and the Track Junction posts discovered that the Chinese had already come nearly 30 miles further west from their circular Haji Langar-Shamul Lungpa road along the Chip Chap river valley and were also constructing a fort at a place only about four miles east of Daulat Beg Oldi. It was also noticed that the Chinese were coming along another unnamed river valley lying between the Track Junction and Murgo, which also ultimately merged with the Shyok valley. The Army then changed its mind and decided not only to maintain the main post at Daulat Beg Oldi and also all subsidiary posts north of Murgo but also to develop an airstrip at Daulat Beg Oldi which could take C-119 planes, for maintaining supplies throughout the year.

Though the disaster which might have followed the withdrawal of the posts from the northern sector was averted, we felt that unless immediate action was taken either along the lines previously suggested by us or some other equally effective line, the Chinese, who were poised to grab more portions of our territory, would soon succeed in doing so. In fact, we calculated that since October, 1959, when a standstill agreement had been arrived at between the two countries with regard to forward patrolling, the Chinese had annexed nearly 2,000 sq. miles of territory in northern Ladakh and had come up nearly to their 1960 claimed line and had grabbed another 400 sq. miles of territory between the Chang Chenmo valley and Khurnak Fort. There were 300 sq.miles

of pastureland still left and, unless we forestalled the Chinese, they would occupy this area also. The discovery of the new Chinese penetration along the Chip Chap and also the unnamed river valley further west from their circular road in October, 1961, further strengthened our misgivings.

It was clear that the Chinese were trying to occupy all the vacant areas before we could move in. In replying to an enquiry from the Ministry of External Affairs regarding a strong but basically false complaint which the Chinese had made about Indian forward patrols and intrusions, we sent a report in October, 1961, in which we refuted all the allegations made against the Indian troops or the police. We pointed out that, during the period of the operation of the standstill agreement, the Chinese had built seven roads inside Indian territory in Ladakh, several roads close to our border in Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, six to Sikkim and Bhutan borders and eight to the NEFA border. We also pointed out that since December, 1959, the Chinese had established as many as seven new posts in Ladakh, fourteen in the central sector of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, twelve across Sikkim and the Chumbi valley, three across Bhutan and as many as twenty-five new posts across NEFA. We also gave a long list of Chinese forward patrols which had intruded into our territory in the central and eastern sectors. From these we concluded that ever since December, 1959, the Chinese efforts had been directed at seizing more Indian territory wherever possible and to create evidence in support of their 1960 claim by pushing forward the line of actual control. We also pointed out that the purpose of the Chinese protest, when the Chinese themselves were guilty of further occupations and intrusions, was to exert pressure to prevent the Indian Government from taking any action to forestall a further Chinese forward move into our territory. We further pointed out that their protest about Indian patrolling, in areas which had been for many years under our effective occupation, was aimed at forcing us to reduce our guard so that they could come and occupy them. In this connection, we also pointed out that the Chinese, if they could not occupy the territory right up to their claimed line in

Ladakh, would probably stake their claims in NEFA in retaliation. And, in fact, later in November, 1961, in one of its letters to the Ministry of External Affairs, the Chinese Government not only reasserted its claim in NEFA but even threw a clear hint at the possibility of the Chinese army intruding into that territory.

Looking from the Intelligence point of view, we felt that the situation was getting very serious. There were areas in our territory which we had not yet physically occupied because they were difficult of access and were generally uninhabited. Unless immediate steps were taken to occupy them by the summer of 1962, we might find that the Chinese had already moved into them. I stressed the dangers to Home Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, as well as to the Defence Minister, Krishna Menon, and then I took up the matter with the Prime Minister himself. I had three long meetings with him, in which, with the help of maps, I explained to him the extent of Chinese penetration into our territories since October, 1959, and the areas where gaps existed into which the Chinese might intrude any moment as they were then poised all along our frontier. The Prime Minister agreed to take a hand in this matter and on November 12, he sent for me and asked me to explain to him on a map the exact areas which, I felt, should be physically occupied by Indian troops or police to forestall any Chinese moves. Along with Hooja, I met the Prime Minister and explained to him the position clearly. He retained the map and the statements prepared by us and asked me to attend a meeting he was holding that evening with the Defence Minister and the Chief of Army Staff on this subject in his house. At this meeting, after the DMO had explained the existing positions and after a general discussion, Pandit Nehru decided that Indian forces should remain in effective occupation of the whole frontier from NEFA to Ladakh and they should cover all gaps by setting up posts or by means of effective patrolling. No longer should the Chinese be allowed to encroach surreptitiously into territories not occupied by Indian troops or police. He, however, ordered that the troops should not fire except in self-defence. There was no protest because the task which Pandit Nehru now set before the Army and the Police was nothing new. These tasks had been

accepted by the Army in October, 1959. If the Army had not been able to reach everywhere in adequate strength, it was because the going was difficult. In fact, the Defence Minister had been stressing this step since the summer of 1960.

Kaul in his book, *The Untold Story*, has referred to this meeting but he has given a slightly different version of the direction given by the Prime Minister. He apparently formed the impression that the Prime Minister was acting under compulsion and his new posture was not based on a consideration of the realities of the situation but was meant as a sop to the Opposition. It would be best to quote from his book to explain what he has given as his interpretation of the decision taken unanimously in a meeting which he and his Chief attended—a decision which was a confirmation of the policy which he as the Chief of General Staff was already implementing. Kaul says, "He [Nehru] first saw on a military map all the recent incursions China had made against us. He said whoever succeeded in establishing even a symbolic post would establish a claim to that territory as possession was nine-tenth of the law. If the Chinese could set up posts, why could not we? He was told owing to numerical and logistic difficulties we could not keep up in this race with the Chinese. If we inducted more posts in retaliation we would be unable to maintain them logistically. Also, China with her superior military resources could operationally make the position of our small posts untenable. We had, however, established a few nominal posts which we were maintaining with some effort." I am sorry to say that except in the first sentence Kaul has made a mistake in his interpretation. It is possible that Kaul's memory played a trick. He had, in the interval, gone through a great deal of suffering, both physical and mental. Pandit Nehru never wanted the establishment of symbolic posts. He wanted the territories to be effectively occupied. Where this could not be done by establishing permanent posts, he wanted that there should be effective patrolling. This decision, as I have said, was accepted without any reservation both by Thapar and Kaul. I think the term "symbolic posts" has been used to justify the opening by the Army, under the orders of the CGS, of many

small posts in the Chip Chap valley of Ladakh, a step which was later militarily criticised, though it was fully justified in the circumstances.

I am afraid that this interpretation of the proceedings of the meeting and the decision taken has left an incorrect impression in Kaul's mind that political considerations forced Pandit Nehru to ask the Army to start on an adventurist policy, for which the Army was not prepared. He got this impression from an earlier meeting to which he refers as follows : "Some Opposition leaders in the Parliament had had a secret meeting with Nehru in the External Affairs Ministry which the Defence Minister, the Army Chief and I also attended, in which he outlined the military situation along our border. Nehru's explanation fell on deaf ears and one Opposition leader said something quite rude....Nehru was aware of the mounting criticism of the people on the subject but also knew the handicaps from which our armed forces were suffering. He was, therefore, anxious to devise some via media and take action short of war to appease the people." It is necessary to stress here that Pandit Nehru never devised a via media short of war to appease the people. He did what the Prime Minister of any country would do, that is to ask the Army to secure the frontier.

Kaul further says that after what Pandit Nehru said, a discussion followed and "what I [Kaul] understood was that there was no reason why India should not play a game of chess and a battle of wits with the Chinese so far as the question of establishing posts was concerned. If the Chinese advance in one place, we should advance in another. In other words, we should keep pace with them as far as possible and maintain a few of our symbolic posts where we could in what we were convinced was our territory. This defensive step of ours might irritate the Chinese but no more. This was how I think the new policy on our borders was evolved, which was referred to by some as forward policy....I think Nehru devised this policy for the benefit of the Parliament and the public and also as a strategy of beating the Chinese in their own game. He hit upon it during a period when the India-China relationship was deteriorating fast. He saw in

it one reply to his critics. He landed in the situation due to constant and unrealistic criticism from the Opposition benches in the Parliament against the way he was handling the border situation". This interpretation is not correct. Pandit Nehru did not embark on this Policy light-heartedly or due to internal pressures. He had no option left but to stop further Chinese advance. In fact, neither the COAS nor the CGS treated this as a joke but took up the work of implementing the decision seriously. A considerable effort was made to push forward to vacant areas both in Ladakh and in NEFA.

The real trouble was that up till the beginning of 1961, the attitude of the Army Headquarters had been to avoid any quarrel with China so far as Ladakh was concerned even if it meant allowing the Chinese to push forward to their claimed border of 1960. The same was the position in the Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh sectors, where a dispute could be avoided if we withdrew from the Chinese-claimed area and did no forward patrolling. In NEFA, though considerable areas in the frontier regions were still unoccupied by us, the attitude was that they could remain as they were and no attempt should be made to push Indian posts forward. In fact, the famous "Thorat Line" of defence, which the Army was at that time adhering to, was an imaginary line which followed just a few miles north of the foothills and at some places nearly 100 miles south of the border. Therefore, there was reluctance on the part of the Army to occupy any posts north of this "Thorat Line" and defend it. The main objection by the Army was that the ground was not suitable for fighting by the Indian Army and it must choose its own ground. This was strange logic. Battles are fought on the frontier, be they suitable or not. One army is always superior to another and on this score no country would meekly allow its frontiers to be overrun by the enemy and choose a battle-ground hundreds of miles to the interior. Defeat at the frontier is always a possibility but the position can be retrieved later but on that account no country gives up the frontier without a fight. The trouble was that though at least from the beginning of 1959, China was plainly on the war-path, and the Government of India had

been fully roused to the danger of Chinese expansionism, the seriousness of the situation had not yet made its impact on the Army Headquarters. This state of mind was well expressed by General Thimayya even as late as in 1962 when he said that "as a soldier he could not think of a total war with China and would leave the dispute to be settled by the diplomats". This attitude continued till Thapar came as COAS and Kaul as CGS. Mankekar and Khera have both mentioned that it was this attitude which was mainly responsible for the Army's unpreparedness when the confrontation came.

It is further wrong to call this policy by the name of "forward policy" at all. In fact, the Prime Minister never referred to it as a forward policy, nor did anyone present at the meeting look upon it as anything but safeguarding our own territory. If it was necessary to give it any name, it could appropriately be called "No more surrender policy". The political aspect of this problem has been very clearly explained by Krishna Menon.* He said:

"It is quite true that five years have elapsed since the major attack on this country by China. But whether you look at the events in China or the events on our border, what you see is the same old perspective and the same thing continuing.

"One aspect of the situation, however, is discernible more clearly than before. What is happening in China now only proves that the Chinese attack on India was exactly what some of us said even at that time: sheer expansionism. The Chinese invasion was the first major external manifestation of the extraordinary phenomenon we witness in China today. The vanguard movement or the cultural revolution or whatever it is called first descended on us.

"Whether the fighting in 1962 was unavoidable is a question which any responsible person cannot answer very easily. Nothing is unavoidable and yet you cannot create synthetic history to suit your convenience....A war which may be avoidable at a

* Krishna Menon's talk with Inder Malhotra as published in 1968 in a Supplement entitled "Black November and After" of *The Statesman*.

particular stage becomes unavoidable at another stage.

"The war with China became unavoidable to the extent that no independent country irrespective of its strength can refrain from defending itself. In undertaking defensive operations the country can never consider the odds. It is not like playing chess. If we are attacked, we have to defend ourselves even if we are beaten.

"I know some people have said that what has come to be known as India's 'forward policy', the policy of establishing forward posts, was at least partly responsible for converting the situation from one of confrontation to that of armed conflict. I think that this is an entirely wrong view. We never followed any forward policy. A forward policy means our trying to get into someone else's territory like Lord Curzon tried to do. There has been at no time an attempt by us to take anything that was not our territory. Establishing posts in an area which belongs to us cannot be called a forward policy. It is like saying that we committed aggression in Kashmir; that is what our enemies say. It was China which was following a forward policy in our territory."

I have already mentioned that the changes that took place in the Army Headquarters in 1961 also brought about a radical change in its outlook and it was fully realised that the Chinese had to be fought on the frontier. So there was complete ideological acceptance of this policy by the Army and nothing was foisted on it. We had frequent meetings with the CGS to devise ways to fill up the gaps and there was full accord on action to be taken. Of difficulties there were many and none had more experience of them than we in the IB who had been in the frontier since 1952. It was not possible to fill up all the gaps immediately. They existed even when the Chinese attacked us in 1962 and it was through these gaps that the Chinese army came into Subansiri, Siang and Lohit. Some of the gaps could not be filled up even as late as 1964. Probably some exist even now. And there was no question of the Prime Minister or the Defence Minister forcing the Army to go to any particular place. The general principle had been laid down and it was for the Army Headquarters to

choose the timing. We worked in perfect harmony with the Army Headquarters and, as Kaul has mentioned in his book, we held frequent discussions and weighed all odds before moving into any vacant space.

It would also be wrong to suggest that the Prime Minister's hands were forced in any way to adopt this new policy (wrongly termed as the forward policy) due to the attitude of the Opposition Parties. That no more leniency should be shown towards China was not the demand of the Opposition Parties alone but of the Congress also and, in fact, of the people throughout the country. Who in this country understood the public sentiments and moods better than Pandit Nehru? And naturally he represented in himself this strong public feeling against China. It would also be uncharitable to insinuate and allege, as some writers have done, that the Prime Minister took this step unthinkingly. In the previous chapters I have revealed how his mind worked. He had always wanted to avoid a war with China, not out of any love for China, nor out of any fear of China's might, but because he foresaw that such a war with China might last for a generation or more and the consequences which would follow might be too terrible and go beyond control and in that process the entire aim of the country might be lost. He himself had scotched the idea of forcing the Army to fight in unsuitable terrain and get entangled in the high mountains. But critics have found support for their views in the Prime Minister's subsequent statement in Parliament that this policy was producing effect. But it was a fact that because the policy was producing the effect it was meant to, and was impeding further Chinese expansionism, that China had to attack India. But what was the alternative? The only alternative was to hand over quietly all the territories which China had claimed and be satisfied with the crumbs which China might leave with India to show her own magnanimity in dealing with a *Panchsheel* ally. But this would have only whetted the Chinese appetite and provided a temporary pause before the next phase of Chinese advance would begin. As Pandit Nehru had explained earlier, India came very much in China's way of expansion and bringing about a state of world revolution and India would not be given

any respite till she changed her way of life and conformed to the Chinese way and meekly followed the political line dictated by the Big Brother. Would any country, much less India, stand this indignity of having to live permanently at the mercy of an unscrupulous enemy? All peaceful methods of persuading the Chinese to take a reasonable line had failed and the earlier gains which they had made as a consequence of India's peaceful approach had only tempted them further. In the circumstances, when the enemy was set on a particular line of action, which was to grab as much of the neighbour's territory as possible, and was prepared to use every possible method, that is treachery, cajoling, threats, trespass, forcible occupation and even outright invasion, what other alternative was there than to confront him all along the frontier and not allow him to transgress Indian territory any further? This was exactly the policy which Pandit Nehru had decided to follow, and there could have been no other policy at this time.

Some critics in the hind-sight of later developments have also criticised the step on the ground that India was militarily weak, though at the time this policy was decided upon there was no criticism at all. But because a country is militarily weak, does it follow that it shall not defend itself? In the thirties did not Ethiopia fight against the Fascist Italian Army? Did Finland surrender to Russia? Yet what chance did she have against the mighty Soviet Union? Did Greece and Yugoslavia surrender to the aggressors? What chances did they have against the combined might of the German and the Italian armies? Yet they all fought for the defence of their country and, though defeated, covered themselves with glory and ultimately managed to get back all that they had lost. So the consideration whether a country is weaker or stronger than the enemy can come only in a war of aggression but not when one has to choose between defending one's motherland and surrender. Which part of the country is to be defended? Obviously it is the frontier which has to be defended first and, if beaten there, there would be further defences at every step so that even if the enemy succeeded ultimately in overrunning large parts of the country, which in this country was

impossible, such terrific losses would be inflicted on him that he would not think of pursuing his aim further. Lin Piao told his army to do exactly this if the enemy (i.e. India) ever entered Tibet. Hence the argument that this policy should not have been enforced at this time because the Indian Army was numerically inferior to the Chinese army and was also not well-equipped is rather specious. Militarily India will not be stronger than China in the foreseeable future. So if this argument about comparative strength is taken to its logical conclusion, there could be no assertion of India's territorial rights for decades to come and in the meantime China could go on grabbing more parts of Indian territory. So the Thorat Line or no line, the enemy had to be met at the frontier wherever he transgressed it. To do justice to our army leaders it must be stated that they were in complete tune with this policy and proceeded to implement it in right earnest.* There were innumerable difficulties on the way but they made an earnest effort to surmount them. Criticism of the policy started only after the Army suffered some reverses in 1962.

Our only regret was that this order had been delayed too long. If the forward patrolling by the armed police had not been stopped in October, 1959, and instead the police had been reinforced by army units, much of the territory west of the Aksai Chin road as well as the large pastures between the Chang Chenmo river and Spanggur Lakes could have been saved from the dragon's clutches.

* General Thapar in an article in *The Statesman* on January 9, 1971, has supported this policy and has maintained that it was entirely defensive in nature. Lt. Gen. Kaul has also supported this view in his article in *The Indian Express* dated January 20, 1971.

20 Confrontation

SOON AFTER THE decision taken at the Prime Minister's meeting that the Army should move into all unoccupied portions of our territory, we were again asked to indicate specifically the areas in NEFA where sizable gaps still existed and which should be occupied because, though by this time the Army Headquarters and the External Affairs Ministry had good knowledge about the Western and Middle Sectors, they were still a little vague about the Eastern Sector. So, in the month of December, 1961, we prepared another review and pointed out ten such gaps with a total area of nearly 5,500 sq. miles in NEFA which still remained physically unoccupied because these areas were very thinly inhabited and were difficult of access. Many of these unoccupied valleys ran east-west parallel to the McMahon Line and entry into them was possible only through the river valleys running north-south. Hence the difficulty was that so long as the road communication did not reach that point in the river valley from which these unoccupied east-west valleys commenced, they remained inaccessible. In this note, we also pointed out where our nearest frontier posts were and where the Chinese were establishing their posts across the border from which they could threaten these vacant areas. We also mentioned that at this time the Chinese were carrying on strong propaganda throughout Tibet telling the local people that they would soon liberate all those areas of Tibet, meaning NEFA, of which India was in unlawful occupation. Actually, this propaganda was producing some adverse effect on the morale of the frontier population in the absence of any physical signs of Indian presence.

In NEFA, operation ONKAR had been introduced in 1960. According to this plan, there was to be a large expansion of the Assam Rifles and units were to be posted all along the frontier

and also in areas not occupied till then. But this expansion of the Assam Rifles naturally took some time and it was not till the end of 1961 that new units started becoming available. In the meantime, the 4 Division had been sent to North Assam and had established its Headquarters at Tezpur. This Division had a Brigade at Tawang with a Battalion each at Tawang, Dirang and Bomdila.

By the time the implications of the new policy had been studied and the requirements of re-inforcements in Ladakh and other frontier areas assessed, the winter of 1961-62 had far advanced and it was not possible for the Indian Army to make any important moves. But from April, 1962, army units from Daulat Beg Oldi started moving eastwards and setting up posts along the Depsang plains and the Chip Chap river valley and within a couple of miles of the Chinese posts to prevent their further penetration westwards. For the first time the Chinese found that the Government of India were asserting their right over this portion of the Depsang Plains. The reaction of the Chinese was violent. Protest notes started coming in rapid succession accusing Indian troops of violating Chinese territory and creating provocations and threatening that the Chinese Government would take necessary steps to foil the incursions of Indian troops. The Chinese note also said that the Chinese Government had ordered their troops to re-start forward patrolling between Karakoram and Kongka La. These protest notes were rejected by the Government of India contending that the posts had been opened in undoubtedly Indian territory and there had been no violation of Chinese territory anywhere; and that, in fact, it was the Chinese who had trespassed nearly 100 miles within Indian territory in this area.

In view of the new Chinese threat, we were asked in the first week of May, 1962, to make another review of the frontier security situation. In that review, which we sent within a few days, we referred to the Chinese threat of forward patrolling, which, in other words, meant that the Chinese troops would move forward in north-east Ladakh and try to occupy the territory within their claimed line of 1960, which was much further west than the claim-

ed line of 1956. We also found that all along the frontier the Chinese had further strengthened their military posts by bringing additional troops from the rear and the total strength of their troops on our border and that of Nepal had been raised by nearly two Divisions. The total Chinese strength on our frontier, including the Nepal frontier, at that time amounted to nearly seven Divisions. We also provided a disposition chart of the Chinese troops across our border. In addition to these troops on our frontier, there were strong Chinese garrisons in Shigatse, Lhasa, Chamdo, Nagchuka and Gyantse and separate troops for holding the lines of communication. So the overall strength of Chinese troops in Tibet was in the neighbourhood of eleven to twelve Divisions. However, the immediate threat was posed by seven Divisions of front-line troops near our borders.

In this review, we also mentioned that the Galwan river valley had been found to be unoccupied when an Indian patrol visited it in the winter of 1961-62; and, as this valley provided an access to the Shyok river valley and the Central Asian routes, it was desirable to establish our post as far forward as possible so as to deny it to the Chinese. We also pointed out that in Ladakh the Nyingri pastures between Chang Chenmo river and Spanggur Lakes had not till then been occupied by the Chinese and this could still be occupied by our forces if they moved in quickly. We also reported that the area north of Pangong Tso and south of Ane La was not yet in the physical occupation of the Indian Army and recommended the opening of a post at Dungure or Yula. The same was the case with the southern bank of Pangong Lake. In the Uttar Pradesh border area, we reported that unless the Indian police continued to stay in Pulam Sumda, Barahoti, Lapthal and Sangchamala during the winter, there was a possibility of the Chinese occupying them before the Indians could move in after the opening of the passes next summer. In Sikkim, also, we warned against the situation in the Lhonak valley, which was not till then properly protected. We pointed out large gaps which still existed in NEFA in spite of the fact that the Assam Rifles had made good progress during the previous three months in going forward to previously unoccupied areas. We suggested that the

Army or the Assam Rifles or the police should be pushed forward to occupy these gaps as soon as possible. We pointed out the existence of Chinese posts across the border of these gaps and stressed the danger of Chinese infiltration into them in the absence of any Indian troops or police. We also reported that the Chinese had since September, 1961, pushed forward their posts nearer our border all along the frontier and they had reinforced their Ladakh posts by a battalion, the posts opposite Nepal by two brigades, opposite Sikkim by two brigades and opposite NEFA by another brigade. So nearly two Divisions of Chinese troops had been pushed forward to our borders as reinforcements to their existing posts. This note was discussed at a meeting presided over by the Defence Minister on May 17. Amongst those present were the Foreign and Defence Secretaries, the Additional Secretary (Sarin), the Army Chief, the Deputy Chief, the CGS besides myself. After reviewing the position, the Defence Minister ordered that all these gaps should be filled up. Even if sizable forces could not be spared, there should be at least a platoon of the Army or police or the Assam Rifles at each of these places.

Apart from the frontier trouble, the relationship between China and India was rapidly deteriorating in other fields also. The Government of India were forced to take action against those Chinese nationals living in Calcutta, who had been thoroughly subverted by the Chinese Consulate and who were working under the latter's orders against Indian interests and were carrying on tendentious propaganda and also threatening and even physically beating up the loyal Chinese. The Chinese Trade Agency at Kalimpong had become a source of intrigue and espionage and had even inspired the murder of a very venerable Tibetan Rimpoche who had escaped into India from the tortures inflicted on him by the Chinese in Tibet. The Government of India were forced to pass deportation orders on several active Chinese propagandists. When the persons tried to defy the orders of deportation at the instigation of the Chinese Consulate, some of them had to be physically taken to Nathu La and put across the border. The Chinese on their side had made the working of the Trade Agreement impossible, had refused any facilities for the construction

of the Agency building at Gyantse, had put various kinds of restrictions on the movements of the Trade Agents of Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok and had even restricted the movements of the Indian Consul at Lhasa. Not content with this, they were making various false allegations against the staff of these offices. The Indian Ambassador, Parthasarathi, who left Peking after the expiry of his term, was not replaced, and the Chinese also withdrew their Ambassador in Delhi without replacing him. Then came the Chinese suggestion that the Trade Agreement should be renewed. Much had been expected of this Agreement on the cultural and economic side, but in actual working, due to the machinations of the Chinese, it was of advantage to the Chinese only in setting up their Trade Agency at Kalimpong and having a Consulate at Bombay and in setting up a China Bank in Calcutta. It was through these that they could command the entire private trade between the Indians and the Tibetans and could control the considerable Chinese population in Calcutta, Kalimpong, Assam and Bombay and it was through these media that they could even carry on propaganda against the Government of India and keep contact with anti-government elements. Obviously no such facility was available to the Indian Officers in Tibet and they could not have done any anti-Chinese propaganda even if they had the opportunity to do so. As the Trade Agreement at this time worked entirely to their favour, the Chinese were keen to renew it but with further revisions in their favour. It is worth recollecting here that, when the Trade Agreement was signed in 1954, the Government of India had suggested its duration for twenty years, but China had opposed its continuance for a long period without renewal and had ultimately agreed to eight years as the maximum limit. Fully warned by now about the misuse of the Agreement, and the fact that the Chinese had unilaterally violated the *Panchsheel* provisions by occupying Indian territory, the Indian Government did not agree to its renewal and allowed it to lapse. The Chinese Trade Agencies in Kalimpong and Delhi as well as the China Bank were closed, and India also withdrew her Trade Agencies from Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok. So the last remnants of the *Panchsheel*

Agreement, on which so much hope had been placed, were abandoned and the period of confrontation had started.

All this time Chinese protests over the establishment of Indian posts in the Depsang Plains and along the Chip Chap valley continued pouring in. There were several cases of exchange of fire between the troops on both the sides, but they were localized affairs. The Indian Army also moved forward as far as possible up to the Indian frontier on the Pangong and Spanggur Lakes and opened a post at Yula but was unable to get into the Nyingri pastures where it was forestalled by the Chinese. The heights round Demchok were also occupied by our troops.

The Prime Minister regularly enquired about the progress in filling the gaps and, on hearing that some gaps still existed, he held another meeting with the Defence Minister and the Chief of Army Staff. He pointed out the gaps that still existed in the defence arrangements, particularly near Rezang La and in Galwan river valley, which he ordered to be filled up quickly, if possible. Gaps at other places were also pointed out and the COAS undertook to send troops or Assam Rifles to them soon. Rezang La post was occupied immediately afterwards and in NEFA the Assam Rifles also moved up to several new positions. Along with them the IB also opened new Intelligence posts. In the UP border, the police did excellent work and occupied the disputed territories before the Chinese could come in. In July, the Galwan river post was opened by the Indian Army in platoon strength. This was immediately surrounded by the Chinese and was maintained with difficulty, but the post was not abandoned. There were several protest notes exchanged over these posts as well as other posts on the banks of the Pangong and Spanggur Lakes and in the Chip Chap river area. In the same month, the Assam Rifles in NEFA went forward and occupied the Dhola post on the south bank of Nyamkachu river, a few miles south of the Thagla ridge, which formed the Himalayan watershed and the boundary between India and Tibet. In fact, a few years earlier the question of possession of this narrow river valley had been discussed between the revenue officers of India and Tibet and the latter had conceded India's right over it as the

pastures were controlled by the villagers of Zimithang in Tawang sub-division. During the discussions between the Indian and the Chinese officials about the boundary in 1960, the Chinese had specifically asked for the coordinates of the boundry at his place and the coordinates given by the Indian officials included the Thagla ridge.

In May, 1962, China and Pakistan came to an agreement to negotiate the delimitation of the boundary between North Gilgit and Hunza in Pakistan-held Kashmir on the one side and Sinkiang on the other. The Indian Government protested that Pakistan had no right to negotiate over this border which belonged to India and pointed out that the Indian border started from the trijunction of India, Afghanistan and China and Pakistan had no *locus standi* at this place. But China summarily rejected India's protest and argued that she was carrying on negotiations with Pakistan as the latter was in control of this area. The Prime Minister pointed out that as early as 1959 the Chinese Ambassador had threatened India that she would soon have to contend with two fronts and remarked that it seemed that at long last China was implementing that threat. China also refused to admit that she had at any stage admitted that Kashmir was a part of India and that the people of Kashmir had made their final choice. This was a clear case of collusion between China and Pakistan and the two were wooing each other to make a common front against India whom they considered to be their common enemy.

At this time we came in possession of two very important pieces of intelligence which clearly indicated the way the situation was going to develop within the next few months. We found that the Chinese Consulate in Calcutta was secretly propagating amongst the fellow travellers and other sympathisers that, forced by the adamant attitude of the Indian Government about the border, the Chinese Government was going to adopt a new line of action towards India. The propaganda was that China had proved her goodwill by settling her border disputes with Burma and Nepal but India had stood out. So China had no other alternative but to settle the border with Pakistan. China did not agree with

Russia that Kashmir was an integral part of India and held that there was a dispute over this territory. China justifiably claimed that the border between India and China had never been physically demarcated and had to be settled by negotiations. Pandit Nehru's stand on the border situation was ridiculed and it was alleged that he had taken this stand for the purpose of building an anti-China campaign. Then it came to the main point which was that, as India had occupied certain posts within Chinese territory, the Chinese considered that military action had become essential to remove this intrusion. The Consulate said that it was forewarning their friends in India, because the latter might feel embarrassed when China took recourse to armed action against India and said that these explanations were being given to prove that military action was being forced on China due to India's provocative action. An article published in the *Peking People's Daily* about this time also hinted what the Chinese expected the Indian Communists to do if such a contingency arose. It gave the instance of Russian attack on the Manchurian railway at the time of the Nationalist regime in China in the twenties when the Chinese Communist Party had supported the Soviet action even though it was an attack against its own country.

The report was so authentic and so alarming that we immediately passed this on to the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Defence Minister. I talked to them personally also about the authenticity of this report and the seriousness of the threat. From the indications given by the Chinese in their talks in Calcutta, we apprehended that the Chinese were planning action next autumn. I also showed this report to the Chief of Army Staff as well as to the CGS. Both were fully seized of the seriousness of the situation. I went to Kashmir and, in the presence of D.W. Mehra, IG of Police, Kashmir, communicated this information to Brig. Grewal, who was in charge of Ladakh and who had been called to Srinagar particularly to meet me for this purpose. It was then that I, for the first time, learnt that he had established a large number of small posts in the Depsang Plains, the Chip Chap river valley and the Pangong and Spanggur Lake area. I questioned the wisdom of establishing these small posts; but he said that he had

done it under orders from above. So Mehra and I met the Corps Commander, Lt.-Gen. Bikram Singh, and learnt that orders to open such posts had come from the Western Command. These orders had actually emanated from the Army Headquarters. This has been referred to by Mankekar in *The Guilty Men of 1962*.

From June onwards not only the possibility but almost the certainty of Chinese attack on our positions in Ladakh and elsewhere always remained in our minds and presumably in the minds of the Defence Minister and the Prime Minister. Therefore, all decisions that were taken thereafter were done with the full knowledge that this reaction was likely to come and was not done unthinkingly, nor were they irresponsible acts as some writers have tried to allege. In all our subsequent discussions about China with the Army Headquarters, we always brought in the point about the Chinese reaction as gathered from this Intelligence report. In fact, even before the Chinese Consulate was preparing the fellow travellers in Calcutta, the Chinese had already moved forward two Divisions of troops to our frontier, as our review made in the month of May had shown.*

Krishna Menon at this time paid a visit to Geneva in connec-

*When Lord Mountbatten came to Delhi in April/May 1963 he wanted to meet me at the earliest possible opportunity. When I met him he said that in his own country the Indian Intelligence was rated so high that he was a little confused when in India he heard complaints about the alleged failure of Intelligence to forewarn the Government about Chinese intentions and he wanted to know what the real position was. I told him that Intelligence had given the Government at least four months' warning of Chinese intentions to attack India and showed him this report. On going through it he remarked that this provided all the information that the Government and the Army Headquarters needed to know about the imminence of Chinese action and if he was the Chief of Staff, he would immediately have moved up troops and positioned them in proper places to counter this threat. He further said that he had seen a lot of Indian Intelligence during the war when he was heading the SAEF and also when he was the Viceroy of India and as an old Intelligence Officer himself, he expressed great delight at the fact that the Indian Intelligence had lived up to its highest traditions. He talked to me about several other things and I conveyed the gist of his talks immediately to the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister.

tion with the Laos Conference and clinked glasses with Chen Yi in a last-minute effort to avoid a conflict but apparently got little out of the Chinese Marshal. This action of Krishna Menon has been unduly criticised by people in India but I think he was right in making this last-minute effort at peaceful settlement.

But this was not all. The other important piece of information that came into our possession was about Pakistan's intentions. About the time the Chinese had made up their minds to attack India and were giving out propaganda feelers to fellow travellers, the President of Pakistan was holding a series of meetings with his three Service Chiefs for a review of the changes required in Pakistan's foreign policy. Both the Chiefs of Air and Army Staffs argued that they were not in favour of a shift in the foreign policy immediately, because the re-equipping and training of the Air Force and Army would still take some time. They were frightened that any major change in their foreign policy might result in America stopping supplies which had continued without a break since the mutual aid pact had been signed. Some more time would be required to complete the reorganisation and re-equipment of the forces. Ayub then said that though Pakistan was a membr of the SEATO, he was not going to involve himself in any war which the SEATO countries might undertake and he would rather conduct a war in Kashmir. He then spelled out his conception of a grand strategy to meet Nehru's intransigence in not settling the Kashmir dispute. He said that China had reached a stage of development when both America and Russia had to take notice of her. China wanted to expand and she could do so either towards Russia or towards the south-east; but as China could not afford to come in conflict with Russia at that time, she had to expand towards the south-east. America could not afford an open and long-drawn-out war with China in this area but could give China a severe blow by way of Japan, Korea and Formosa. But he did not think that this strategy would succeed. Regarding the possibility of a Sino-Indian war, Ayub felt that China could not fight a long and open war with India because of thousands of miles of mountainous terrain between China and the Indian plains and in these areas only

guerrilla warfare was possible but not a major war of modern dimensions. It was impossible for the Chinese to maintain their long lines of communication running through mountains through which they could not in any case bring their armour, and in the plains the full might of the Indian Army could meet them. The other alternative lay through Burma and that also posed a danger to lines of communication, which also would be too long. Therefore, China would fight India in the frontier regions containing high hills and deep jungles where her guerrilla training would make her invincible. But India would not be defeated that way. So the only solution lay in Pakistan and China forging a grand alliance against the common enemy, India. West Pakistan had the finest human fighting material who understood and had the measure of the Indians. He said that the only fighting material in India consisted of the Sikhs, the Gurkhas and the Rajputs. He gave an analysis of how these three races would react to the fighting against Pakistan and against China. His strategy would be that whilst the Chinese guerrillas would attack India from north and east and keep Indian forces heavily engaged, Pakistan would make an onslaught from the west. To make this strategy possible Ayub was willing to go to any length to court China. A letter had been sent inviting Mao Tse-tung to visit Pakistan and also to bring Liu Shao-chi and Chou En-lai with him. He would lull the Americans by saying that though he did not attach any importance to the pacts, he would not mind if the mutual security pact was kept alive against the Russians.

We passed on this information also to the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the Defence Minister and the Army Headquarters. This possible military collusion between Pakistan and China remained imprinted in the minds of our leaders and the Army Headquarters and explains why, instead of disturbing the divisions on the Pakistan front only where full formations were available, the Army Headquarters was forced to pull out units in battalion strength from the south and central areas to form new brigades and divisions, why there was want of cohesion amongst the various units, and also why the troops build-up in Ladakh and NEFA could not be any faster.

This report was also authentic and its authenticity was subsequently fully tested. When, during the Chinese invasion, the Americans and the British sought a guarantee from President Ayub that he would not use this opportunity to attack India, the latter at first refused to give such a categorical undertaking. But the Chinese finished their war quickly and in any case India did not withdraw any substantial number of troops from the Pakistan front and the promise of foreign aid in arms came quickly. So this grand strategy could not be put into effect and remained in cold storage for the time being. It may be recalled that when in 1965 Pakistan was waging a war against India, China took a menacing posture on the Indian frontier, no doubt to ease Indian pressure on the Pakistan front. But the cease-fire agreement at the instance of the United Nations prevented China from coming directly to the aid of Pakistan on this occasion. China, however, kept its offensive posture for long and even tried its best to sabotage the Tashkent Agreement.

In June/July, 1962, we noticed the movement of some senior Chinese officers to the areas opposite Subansiri and Siang divisions. They enquired about the routes and the suitability of certain places across our border for opening new posts where they did not exist till then. The visit by such senior officers could not have been for the purpose of opening posts. They obviously had come for reconnaissance to decide on their tactics if a war with India became inevitable. Some new troop movements were also noticed and it was possible that to counter our action in Ladakh, the Chinese were planning to intrude into those parts of the NEFA frontier where gaps still existed and then force the Government of India to vacate the areas in Ladakh in return for the Chinese quitting NEFA.

Seeing these ominous signs which seemed to be a confirmation of the Chinese plans to attack India, we made another review of the security situation in the frontier on August 31, 1962. Dealing with Ladakh, we pointed out that the Chinese had by then opened thirty new posts in the Depsang Plains and had surrounded several of the Indian posts established there. They had also surrounded in strength the Galwan river valley

post. They had built or were building new roads from Samzungling along the Galwan river valley and from Khurnak Fort to Sirijap and Spanggur to Shingzang along the southern bank of the lake. These roads would facilitate their further advance. The Chinese had opened a post behind the Indian post at Yula so that our only means of communication with it was by boat across the Pangong Lake. We concluded that in Ladakh the Chinese were relentlessly pushing forward to their 1960 claimed line, and they would not only try to break the line of new posts established by Indian forces to block the Chinese advance but they might also break the well-established line along the international frontier in South-East Ladakh held by Indian police and troops. We, therefore, recommended the strengthening of the Galwan valley area and all the other valleys leading into Galwan or Shyok to stop the Chinese from outflanking our troops and also strengthening the Rezang La area from which Indian troops had been withdrawn as a thrust here posed a threat to our communication to Demchok and Chusul. In the Spiti area of Punjab, we recommended the opening of a post in the upper reaches of the Spiti river as this area was claimed by the Chinese.

With regard to NEFA, we pointed out that the Chinese were consolidating and strengthening their position in Tibet across our frontier. They were about to complete their occupation of the Pemako area and this would give them easy access into the Siang division via Tuting. We pointed out the new Chinese posts that had been set up near the Lola Pass (north of Mechuka) and the Glei Dakru Pass in Lohit and the visit of Chinese patrols to Thagla (near our Dhola post), Tamadem, Potrang, etc. across Subansiri division and Sama in Lohit. They were also hurriedly building roads from Marmang to Le (ten miles from Thagla) and Chayul Dzong to Lung on the way to Lola and from Rima towards Kibithoo on our frontier in Lohit. The Chinese were also asserting their claim over Longju and they were telling the NEFA tribals that Taksing, Limeking and Daporijo in Subansiri and Tuting in Siang belonged to them. The Chinese were also wooing the NEFA tribals by sheltering outlaws from our territories and were promptly giving them positions of village headmen and issuing

them with rifles. (The Chinese used these outlaws as their guides subsequently when they invaded NEFA.) Finally, we pointed out a few more places where gaps existed and suggested that they should be quickly occupied.

The D-day, according to us, was approaching fast because by mid-September the weather in NEFA and all the northern frontiers would normally clear. Anticipating this, on September 7, 1962, we made a fresh assessment of the Chinese army strength and dispositions across the Northern frontiers. In this we estimated the overall Chinese strength near the frontier and excluding those in rear areas like Lhasa, Chamdo, Nagchuka, etc. to be of the order of eight divisions. Against our positions in North and North-East Ladakh, i.e. from Daulat Beg Oldi to Spanggur area, the Chinese had increased their strength by two battalions to bring it to two brigades. These were under the Sinkiang command. In South Ladakh and the areas opposite Punjab and Himachal also the strength had been augmented by two battalions to bring it to eight-battalion strength, i.e. nearly one Division. Of this one battalion was deployed in Tashigong to threaten Demchok. The Chinese had at this time no sizable strength against our strong point in Ladakh, i.e. Chushul. Across the Nepal border there were twenty-three battalions which could be easily moved either east or west as the situation developed. Actually, up to a Division strength could at any time be brought against Sikkim from Shigatse within a couple of days. Against Sikkim and Bhutan four brigades were deployed of which one brigade was north of Sikkim, two in the Chumbi valley, which was a dagger pointed at the Kalimpong region, and one across Bhutan. Across NEFA, we estimated the strength to be nineteen battalions, i.e. two divisions, and mentioned that several of the frontier posts had been strengthened by bringing troops from the rear areas. This estimate only accounted for the Chinese troops near our border which were ready to take offensive or defensive action at any time and did not take into account the reserves which the Chinese held at Lhasa, Gyantse, Shigatse, Chamdo and Nagchuka—from which places troops could be easily moved to our frontiers within two to seven days. Three to four additional divisions were available

at these places. There were also other troops guarding the line of communication in Tibet. But they could not be deployed on the frontier.

So the Chinese seemed to be well set for an offensive at this time in Ladakh, Sikkim and in NEFA. There was no significant sign of offensive preparations in the Central Sector.

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21 China Invades India

PANDIT NEHRU LEFT for London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference on the early morning of September 8. As Morarji Desai was also away, the Prime Minister left Lal Bahadur Shastri and T.T. Krishnamachari jointly in charge. Lt.-Gen. Kaul had earlier proceeded on leave on September 2. His leave had been objected to by the Defence Minister and the Chief of Army Staff, because they apprehended that the Chinese might create trouble before the winter set in.* But Kaul's relationship with Krishna Menon at this time was rather bad. Since his meeting with Chester Bowles in March, 1962, during which he might have received assurances of American arms supply, Kaul had shown a progressive defiance of the Defence Minister and had pressed him to turn to America for large-scale military assistance. To this Menon would not agree. He wanted to keep his option open to get supplies from any country where it was available. His further argument was that America would put strings except in the case of nominal supplies, which in any event would make little difference. By August, 1962, Kaul and Menon were practically not on talking terms. This was the main reason why Kaul went away on leave at this time, though it was also true that he was tired due to constant hard work and illnesses in the family.

Maj.-Gen. Dhillon, Deputy CGS, officiated as the CGS during Kaul's absence. Lt.-Gen. Sen was the Army Commander in the Eastern Command and under him Lt.-Gen. Umrao Singh was the Corps Commander of the XXIII Corps, which had NEFA in its charge. Maj.-Gen. Naranjan Prasad was the GOC, Tezpur, as Commander of the 4 Division. Lt.-Gen. Daulat Singh was the Army Commander in Western Command and under him Lt.-Gen.

* B.M. Kaul, *The Untold Story*.

Bikram Singh was the Commander of the III Corps, which had Ladakh in its charge. Brigadier Grewal was commanding the troops in Ladakh.

After the occupation of the Dhola post on the Nyamkachu river south of Thagla Ridge by the Assam Rifles in June/July, 1962, we received several reports that the Chinese were propagating in the Tsona region of Tibet, that they would soon cross the Nyamkachu river and drive the Indians out of that valley and even from Tawang. They were also saying that they would distribute silver dollars at Tawang to poor people and had even asked the people at Tsona to make a list of the poor at Tawang. This was no doubt being done to subvert the local population of Tawang. India's international frontier was Thagla Ridge (4 to 5 miles north of the Nyamkachu River) whose coordinates had been given by the Indian officials to the Chinese during their joint discussions. The Chinese had, however, claimed Thagla to be north of the McMahon Line, which they contended was further south. Of course, they did not recognise the validity of the McMahon Line itself.

The Chinese troops in approximately two Company strength crossed Thagla Ridge on September 8 and laid siege to the Dhola Assam Rifles post hoping that as a result of this threat the post would withdraw as had happened at Longju three years earlier and the Chinese would be able to occupy that territory. One should not conclude from this sequence of events that the trouble with China was precipitated due to our occupation of the Dhola post. Even earlier the Chinese were justifying to their friends in Calcutta the recourse to armed action in Ladakh to throw out the Indian posts. As our May review had shown, even as early as April, 1962, the Chinese had moved fairly large additional forces to the frontier and they were also hurriedly extending their road communications and building fortifications round their frontier posts. They had subsequently laid practical siege to the Galwan River post and the Yula post on Pangong Tso and to several smaller posts in the Depsang Plains.

In describing the course of events that followed this intrusion, it would be unnecessary for me to deal in detail with the actual

movement of troops and of the operations undertaken by our army and the fighting that took place. This has been done very painstakingly by Major Johri in his excellent book, *The Chinese Invasion of Nefa*. Two other books—one by Lt.Gen. B.M. Kaul entitled *The Untold Story* and the other by Brigadier J.P. Dalvi, *The Himalayan Blunder*—also give many details of the operations. But these two writers have given a subjective account as the main purpose of their books was to defend themselves. Johri did not have to defend anybody and has been able to present an objective and detailed account of local decisions taken, of troop movements and of the actual fighting. I shall confine myself here to describing the decisions which were taken at the Headquarters, the compulsion of events that led to these decisions and the picture of the operations as we saw them from Delhi. It is necessary to throw light on these decisions and the reasons why they were taken because some of them have been widely criticised by people in general and the Press as they did not know all the facts. Moreover, some of these decisions have been misrepresented by Kaul and Dalvi—may be because it suited their defence or may be that was how they looked at these decisions from the limited zones of their responsibility. Khera could have cleared many points but he was spanning such a wide canvas in his book, *India's Defence Problem*, that he could not go into all these details. Moreover, he was not present at all the meetings at which many of the decisions were taken and was not aware of the appreciation given in Chapter 18 and the intelligence analysis given in Chapter 20.

From September 10, Krishna Menon used to hold a daily meeting in his room to discuss the frontier situation. The Chief of Army Staff and the officiating CGS used to represent the Army Headquarters and Lt.-Gen. Sen used to attend whenever he was in Delhi. Brigadier Palit, the DMO, was sometimes called for consultation as he had much local knowledge of the Kameng Division, having been the Brigade Commander in the Tawang Sector up to 1961 when he came to Delhi. Other persons who were generally present were the Chief of Air Staff (Air Marshal Engineer); the Additional Secretary of Defence, H.C. Sarin;

the Foreign Secretary, M.J. Desai; and myself. The Cabinet Secretary, S.S. Khera, also used to attend infrequently before October 20, but regularly after that date. I myself was away from Delhi from September 8 to 10 but from September 11 onwards, whenever I was at Headquarters, I used to be invariably present at the meetings. In fact Krishna Menon insisted on my attendance. When I attended the meeting on September 11, I learnt that a decision had already been taken and orders issued to move the 9 Punjab Battalion to Nyamkachu to oust the Chinese from our territory.

The general course of discussions took the following pattern. After Krishna Menon's opening observations, I used to be asked to give an intelligence appreciation and I did so. If the Chief of Army Staff or the Army Commander was present, he would then give a review of the build-up of both sides in Dhola and other sectors in NEFA. The COAS would also describe the situation in Ladakh. The Foreign Secretary would give an account of the exchange of communications which was then going on with China over this and other intrusions in NEFA or Ladakh or elsewhere. The COAS or the Army Commander would then explain what their plans were. Where air support in the form of supplies or transporting troops came in, the Air Marshal would give his views and undertake commitments. Never throughout the entire course of these discussions was any decision ever thrust on the Army Headquarters. In fact, day after day, we heard from the COAS what he proposed to do. The CGS reported the build-up of troops in NEFA or Ladakh. From the very beginning we were given the impression that the Indian Army was capable of driving out the Chinese beyond the Thagla Ridge and was going to do it. In fact, we were told that it was at Tawang that the Indian Army was at its strongest throughout the entire frontier as there was a brigade with sufficient artillery there and these troops were properly acclimatised and had good knowledge of the terrain. So the question was never raised whether the Chinese could or should be driven out. It was accepted that they could be and must be driven out. The only question was how soon this could be done and what more reinforcement was necessary. About the assessment

of requirements and whence they could come, this was entirely within the competence of the Army Headquarters and any suggestion by others would be redundant. Regarding the date of the operations, this was also entirely left to the Army Headquarters and no date had ever been fixed by the Defence Minister or the Prime Minister, though everyone was keen for an early ouster. But it was entirely for the army to decide when it could start the operations. Of course, there was one compelling factor about the date. Generally snow commenced falling after October 15 and by mid-November some of the passes might be closed. Hence if the operation was delayed beyond November, it could be undertaken only in May next when the passes would re-open. Krishna Menon, no doubt, mentioned on several occasions the adverse public reactions to continued Chinese occupation of our territory but he never laid down where the army was to fight and when.

The first person to break the Chinese siege of Dhola was Kumar, the Intelligence Officer at Chuthangmo. He arrived there on the 10th and radioed to us from Dhola that the Assam Rifles post was intact, that the Chinese had withdrawn to the north bank but were still holding two bridges, and that the Chinese strength was about 200. As soon as the news of intrusion had come to Delhi, the Army Headquarters had asked the XXIII Corps based at Shillong to move the battalion of 9 Punjab to the Nyamkachu position. 9 Punjab sent a patrol immediately, which found that the Chinese had withdrawn from the bridges also and probably their total strength south of Thagla Ridge was not more than 200. On or about September 13, Lt.-Gen. Sen was asked by the Chief of Army Staff to go to Tezpur and make a review of the position and also to find out how our troops build-up was progressing. On the 16th, Krishna Menon asked me to give a full assessment of the Chinese strength across our borders and particularly near NEFA and Ladakh.

The crucial meeting was held on September 17. Krishna Menon first enquired if I was ready to give my intelligence review. With the help of Hooja and Dave, working till late on September 16, we had prepared a complete assessment of the Chinese strength with tables and maps of Chinese dispositions. I produced

these at the meeting. This was an elaboration of the report we had sent on September 7. Our estimate at this time was that the Chinese had about nineteen battalions of troops right across NEFA. During the last few months, all Chinese border posts had moved forward and had been considerably reinforced. The Chinese posts were now quite near our frontiers. Thus troops from Tsethang had moved forward to Tsona, Khata, etc. and troops from Tsona had moved forward to Marmang and Le, which was about 10 miles from Thagla Ridge. The strength of Chinese troops in the Tsona-Marmang-Le-Shao sector could be estimated at 5 battalions, i.e. about 2 brigades. Similar was the position practically all over the frontier and everywhere the Chinese had moved their frontier posts quite close to the Indian borders. Senior Chinese officials had been visiting Tsona, Khata, Lhuntze Dzong, Sangacholing, Lung, etc. for the previous few months. Since July, Chinese troops across the NEFA had been practising jungle warfare and training in hand grenades and musketry. They had constructed defence works in all the forward posts. They had been issued modern machine guns in place of the old weapons. Field telephone lines had also been brought quite near the frontier. The Chinese were telling the Tibetans not to be worried about the large-scale troop movements that were taking place and had assured the people of Marmang and Le that they would drive the Indians away from the post at Tsedong (Dhola) within a few months. The Chinese had posted two Companies of their troops in front of the Khinzemane Indian Post and a Company at Shao opposite Bumla to be used both for defensive and offensive purposes. They had evacuated the population from the frontier in the Tsona-Le-Shao sector and had brought Tibetans from the rear areas to assist them. A telephone line had been laid from Le to the Thagla Ridge and probably had been taken to the Chinese Battalion Headquarters in the valley. Plenty of rations and ammunition had been stocked at suitable places and additional accommodation had been built at Tsona indicating the arrival of more troops.

There were three routes from Tawang and Zimithang to Tibet. The direct route from Tawang would be through Bumla,

which the Chinese were protecting with their troops at Shao where they had built fortifications. The second route from Zimithang through Khinzemane was covered by two Companies. The third route, which was longer and more difficult and lay through Thagla was being held in strength by the Chinese troops which had crossed into the valley. Naturally all these three routes could be used for offensive operations also. The latter two routes allowed a passage straight down to Missamari in the plains bypassing Tawang.

We also found that across the Subansiri Division the Chinese had moved two additional battalions to bring the strength under Lhuntze Dzong command to a full Brigade. Defence preparations, road construction, storing of supplies and ammunition had also been made in the same way as in the frontier of Kameng Division. We apprehended that all this presaged a threat from Sangacholing to Taksing and from Migyitun to Longju-Maja. In the Siang Division, we found that the Chinese had moved forward close to our border at Tamadem and Lola. They had reinforced Ngiti and Nayu and were rapidly constructing roads to our frontier and also parallel to it. The Chinese strength deployed against the Siang border was of the order of 5 battalions. This posed a threat to Manigong, Mechuka and Gelling. The Chinese had also come into Pemako where the Brahmaputra left Tibet and entered India and thus a threat had developed to Korbo and Tuting. This route also gave them access to the NEFA foothills. Chinese activities had also been noticed across the Lohit Division and the Drowa Gompha-Rima road leading to Kibithoo and Walong had been improved. There was also movement across the Anini frontier and posts had been established here also.

Therefore, it was clear that the Chinese had not only crossed the frontier at Thagla but had moved up to our frontier all along NEFA and had troops in sizable strength across the frontier facing each of the four districts of NEFA. The Chinese also had good reserves at Lhasa, Shighatse, Gyantse and Chamdo and these could be moved forward quickly, if needed. As the Chinese were also poised all along our frontier, it was clear that if fighting

broke out in the Nyamkachu river valley, it might not be a localised affair.

Thapar then enquired if there was danger of an all-out war breaking out all over the frontier if we took action at Dhola. He was not at that time prepared for an all-out war in NEFA as he did not have sufficient troops except in Kameng Division. M.J. Desai said that as our own operation was going to be a very limited one—that of evicting the Chinese from the Nyamkachu river valley—it was unlikely that there would be a general escalation, though the Chinese might threaten our posts at one or two more places. This had been the pattern of Chinese behaviour on other parts of the frontier.

In a press article dated January 9, 1971, Thapar has said, "The IB's assessment was that although there were 8 to 10 Divisions of Chinese troops in Tibet they were mostly occupied with the Khampa rebellion and building of roads." This is not correct. The Khampa rebellion had been suppressed in 1959 and, though sporadic small-scale disturbances had continued at various places, this could not in any way affect the Chinese ability to conduct a short war against India. Also no troops were deployed for road-building. There were, of course, Military Engineering groups who were engaged in this work utilising Tibetan slave labour. Our estimate was that the Chinese strength near the frontier was of the order of 8 Divisions. In addition, there were 3 to 4 Divisions available at places like Lhasa, Gyantse, Chamdo, etc. There were also other troops guarding the lines of communication. We gave our definite conclusion to the effect that the Chinese seemed to be well set for offensive action at this time in Ladakh, Sikkim and NEFA.

Sen had that day returned from Tezpur after conferring with Umrao Singh, the Corps Commander, and Naranjan Prasad, the Division Commander. He told us that the 9 Punjab had been collected on the Nyamkachu river and was in a position to attack the Chinese troops south of Thagla Ridge and drive them away. But as the Chinese had stronger froces north of Thagla Ridge, he would prefer to collect a brigade strength at Nyamkachu before taking the offensive. As he was not quite sure of the Chinese

strength, he "would not like to stick his head out too far till he was quite sure of his own position". We had till then been assured by the Army Headquarters that as soon as the 9 Punjab collected at Nyamkachu the operations could begin to clear the Chinese from south of the Thagla Ridge. So the hesitation expressed by Sen acted as a bit of a damper to all of us. Krishna Menon asked for opinions across the table. When my turn came, I said that in view of what Sen had said we should wait till he was in a position to assemble a brigade. (Sen had commanded a battalion in Burma and a Brigade in Kashmir and had distinguished himself at both the places. I also had found him to be very sound as a CGS. So I had no doubt that he would take the correct military decision. In any case, in a matter of this type, his opinion was final—at least so far as I was concerned.) Sarin, who was sitting across the table in front of me, sent a slip across saying that I had made a mistake. This was the time to oust the Chinese. By the time we assembled a brigade we would find that the Chinese had assembled two Brigades and then they would never be ousted. When his turn came to speak, he said that the attempt should be made immediately. However, Sen's view, which was also supported by Thapar, prevailed and the Defence Minister decided that the operations should be delayed till the Brigade could be assembled. The Army Commander fixed the time table of the movements. He expected that a second battalion would reach the river by about the 20th, a third about the 24th and a fourth battalion by the 29th; and, giving the Brigade three days to consolidate its position, he should be in a position to undertake the offensive operation on October 2. The COAS said that though he was not in a position immediately to oust the Chinese from this valley, he would contain the Chinese south of the Thagla ridge and would not allow them to expand their positions in the valley. He also decided that the Tsangley position north-west of Nyamkachu would also be held to deny the Chinese the opportunity to outflank our positions on the river and also to secure our back towards Bhutan. He wanted supplies by the Air Force to be expedited and this the Air Chief agreed to do. Krishna Menon wanted the IAF to take over the Kalinga Airways to aug-

ment its fleet but the Air Marshal did not favour this step as, according to him, the Kalinga had very experienced pilots fully acquainted with NEFA and taking over the Kalinga by the IAF, far from improving the position, would retard the build-up.

I have called this meeting crucial because everyone present had received a detailed assessment of the Chinese strength, their reactions to the limited Indian offensive and a review of our own military position. The earlier decision to send the 9 Punjab to break the siege of Dhola Post and to oust the Chinese from south of Thagla Ridge was a military decision. Similarly the decision taken on the 17th to postpone the operation till a Brigade was assembled at Nyamkachu was also a military one. So was the decision taken to contain the Chinese in an area south of the ridge and to occupy the Tsangley position. At no stage was any influence exercised by any civilian authority. We had no reason to think that militarily any of these decisions was incorrect.

Kaul and Dalvi have referred to the alleged issue of contradictory orders from the Army Headquarters and have even insinuated that these were issued under political pressure. I am not aware of what orders were issued by the COAS or the Army Commander to the Corps Commander or whether any orders were issued direct to the Division and the Brigade Commanders short-circuiting the Corps Commander and whether there were any protests by the Corps, Division or Brigade Commanders. These were, however, entirely internal matters of the Army and no civilian authority came into the picture.

Krishna Menon continued with these meetings and reviews were given every day by the COAS about the build-up on the Nyamkachu front, and on the 19th we were told that the 2 Rajput had already arrived at Nyamkachu and that the 1/9 Gurkha would also arrive on schedule. Throughout this period every day I used to meet the Home Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, in the evening and keep him informed of the developments that were taking place in the frontier and the decisions that had been taken on our side. It did not occur to me at this time that I should keep Krishnamachari also informed, nor was it suggested to me by either the Defence Minister or the Home Minister. If I had kept

Krishnamachari also informed, it would have saved us from a lot of misunderstanding which occurred subsequently. The Defence Minister, of course, used to enquire from me often whether I had kept the Home Minister informed. He also used to meet the latter to apprise him of the position. The Home Minister had never questioned the decisions taken. In fact, they had his full approval.

When the meeting of September 17 was over, I followed Krishna Menon to his room and advised him to recall Kaul from leave. My point was that the situation was looking bad and considerable troop movements were required and there were shortages of many types and though Dhillon was doing his best, he had not the experience or the authority of Kaul and so the permanent CGS should be back at his post at this time to handle this work. But Krishna Menon was not responsive. On my insistence, he said that I could talk to Kaul and induce him to come back. So that day I rang up Kaul at Srinagar and suggested to him that he should come back. But Kaul would not agree. He said that he could return only if the COAS officially recalled him. I argued that he should not insist on the observance of such formalities when the country was in danger, but he was quite adamant. So I gave up any further attempt at persuasion. Next morning when I mentioned this to Thapar, I found that he was not keen. I then suspected that something had gone wrong. I did not then know that Kaul had gone away on leave really on account of his differences with Krishna Menon and so the latter was not going to take the initiative to call him back and neither would Kaul return without the initiative first coming from the Minister. I did not make any further attempt in this direction, nor did I tell Krishna Menon that I had attempted and failed. I still feel that if Kaul had functioned as the CGS at this time, it would have made a lot of difference.

On or about September 18, Lt.-Gen. Daulat Singh, Army Commander, Western Command, was present at the morning meeting. I was asked by Krishna Menon to give an appraisal of the enemy threat in the Western and Central Sectors. We had no more information than what we had already catered on

September 17 and I repeated this. We were certain that independently of what the Indians or the Chinese did at Dhola, the Chinese were sure to attack the Indian positions in North-East Ladakh wherever they had been established within the Chinese 1960 claimed line. Thus the sector from Daulat Beg Oldi to Hot Springs, including Galwan, was threatened. This threat would be of two-brigade strength. But in this sector the Chinese would be able to bring in more troops from Kashgar or Hotien. We did not at that time see any troop concentrations between Hot Springs and Dungti but in the vicinity of Demchok there was a Chinese Battalion which could go into the offensive against the lightly held Indian positions round that place. We had not noticed any signs of a threat to Southern Ladakh or Punjab and the Himachal frontier. The Defence Minister then asked the Army Commander to explain his plan of defence. The latter said that due to the shortage of troops in Ladakh, he could not defend any position outside the Ladakh valley (20 to 30 miles round Leh) and advocated that he should give up all his forward positions and concentrate his troops round Leh. But there was a chorus of protest. My point was that when hostilities were apprehended, if the army withdrew so far (in many directions over one hundred miles) behind the present front, it would be impossible for the Police or IB posts to exist and we would be meekly surrendering an area of nearly 20,000 sq. miles to the Chinese, after struggling hard for so many years and suffering untold hardships to establish our physical control over it. From Hot Springs to Demchok, except at Demchok itself, we were everywhere outside the Chinese 1960 claimed line and there was no reason why we should flee our own territory. Moreover, our strong point in the Ladakh frontier was Chushul and from it the Indian army could easily threaten Rudok and cut the Chinese road communication with Sinkiang and so we should not desert our posts though adjustments could be made by withdrawing some of the indefensible small posts and even the posts at Galwan and Yula. Another point that I urged was that if we allowed the Chinese guerrilla army to approach so near our base in Leh, they would swarm across the hills from all directions and it would be impos-

sible to hold even Leh. The Chinese could then effect a direct link-up with the Pakistanis at Kargil and we would have to withdraw south of the Zozila Pass, losing Ladakh for ever. Air Marshal Engineer also strongly opposed any withdrawal from the Ladakh frontier. He said that the IAF had built the Chushul airfield with great trouble and it was better than the field at Leh. He was prepared to fly any reinforcement and equipment to Chushul as the AN-12 planes could land at and take off from this place easily. He even offered to bomb targets in West Tibet bordering Ladakh if any Chinese troop concentrations were noticed there. The COAS also did not support the proposal to withdraw without a fight. So Daulat Singh relented but asked for at least one more battalion to be flown to Chushul and some guns. And true to his word, the Air Marshal lifted all the requirements not only to Chushul but also to Daulat Beg Oldi, Koyul and Leh. So our troops stayed in their existing positions on the Ladakh frontier with minor adjustments and fought some of the toughest battles with the Chinese and inflicted many more casualties on the latter than they suffered. And it was in Ladakh that the Chinese penetration was the least, though our troops had finally to withdraw from Daulat Beg Oldi, Demchok, etc.

As the Air Marshal was wanting to examine the possibility of bombing enemy fortifications and concentrations in western Tibet, where they were clearly visible from the sky and of which he had some good pictures, we were asked to make an assessment of the Chinese Air strength which could be brought against us. From our sources we had good information about the Chinese airfields in Tibet and Sinkiang and also in the Yunan province bordering Burma, from all of which air attacks on India could be mounted. On the question of total Chinese Air strength and description of various types of planes and the state of training and supplies of the Chinese Air Force, we were partly dependent on our "friends", and we have reason to believe that we got quite accurate information on these matters. The Chinese Air Force at that time was rated to be the third biggest and strongest Air Force in the world, the only countries ahead of China being the USA and Russia. In the absence of any night intercepters in India,

their bombers could penetrate as far south as Madras during night and return unmolested after completing their mission. Though shortage due to the withdrawal of Russian assistance was beginning to be felt, the position was not yet too bad. It would certainly come in the way of Chinese Air effort in case of a war with a country with very strong Air power like Russia or America, but not with India. We also reported that prior to 1961 Russia had supplied to China Mig-21 intercepter-fighters and the Chinese had a large number of the earlier types of Mig-17 and Mig-19 planes which they were then manufacturing. Incidentally, Mig-19 was also a night intercepter and could make it difficult for our Canberras to operate. Krishna Menon violently disagreed and said that my assessment about the Chinese having Mig-21 planes was quite baseless because he was quite definite that the Russians had not supplied Mig-21 to any country other than India. I maintained that my assessment was correct and pointed out that the Russians had promised to supply Mig-21 to Indonesia also. (Subsequently it was revealed that the Chinese had, in fact, a large number of Mig-21 fighters prior to 1962, and so the information given by us was correct.) But Krishna Menon would not agree. We also had evidence that the Chinese had at least once practised para-dropping of men in large numbers in western Tibet, but, due to high winds, they had suffered many casualties and probably they would not think of it any more. After discussions, it was decided that rather than escalate the war and endanger our important civilian targets like Calcutta, Kanpur, etc., compared to which we had no corresponding targets in Tibet, and the targets in China were beyond the reach of our bombers, it was better to limit the role of the Air Force to that of transport and supply.

There was an important Security Council meeting commencing about September 20 and Krishna Menon was very anxious to attend it. When he mentioned this to me, I expressed my strong disapproval. He had a good grasp of the Army problems and in the background of the information which we had catered previous June about Chinese and Pakistani intentions, he was quite aware of the possibility of a twin threat developing from

China and Pakistan simultaneously. He had good knowledge of the various supplies required for the armed forces and knew where to get them from in an emergency. So I felt that his absence from India at this time would be inopportune. He, however, argued that he would be back by September 30 and in any case no operations were going to take place before October 2 or 3. I said that these were our dates but we could not bind the Chinese down to this schedule and they might forestall us. To this he replied that he could always come back within twelve hours on receipt of an SOS of any untoward happening. But I maintained my opposition. However, on the 19th he informed me that he had consulted Lal Bahadur Shastri and had obtained the latter's consent to go. I again repeated that he was making a mistake and people would not excuse him for his absence if anything went wrong in the operations. That night when I met the Home Minister, I remonstrated with him for allowing Krishna Menon to go out of India at that critical time. The Home Minister, however, said that Krishna Menon was so insistent that he had to agree and he asked me to attend all Defence meetings and keep him fully posted about the events so that, if necessary, he could call back Krishna Menon immediately.

In Krishna Menon's absence, Raghu Ramaiah, the Minister of State, used to hold the daily meetings. Then Lal Bahadur Shastri went away to Kerala. Krishnamachari then complained that he had been kept in the dark about what was happening on the frontier and wanted that a full report should be made to him. Raghu Ramaiah did this but I do not know if Krishnamachari was satisfied. However, Shastriji returned within a few days and on my advice agreed to keep Krishnamachari informed of the developments in future.

On September 24, we reported to the Government the flood of propaganda which the Chinese had let loose in Tibet adjoining our frontiers denigrating India and the Indians, accusing the latter of trespassing into Tibetan territory and threatening swift reprisal. They ridiculed the fighting powers of the Indian troops, saying that as soon as the Chinese would advance, the Indians would run away and cited Tamadem and Longju as examples.

They were inciting the NEFA tribals like the Bokars and the Tagins living near the border to defy Indian authority. They claimed Dhola, Limeking, Manigong, Mechuka, Tuting, Walong, etc. to be Chinese territory and asserted that the Chinese would soon liberate these areas. They claimed the territory right up to the Brahmaputra as belonging to them. They further boasted that as they had defeated the Americans in Korea, they were not afraid of the Indians. We also reported on this day that more than one battalion of fully equipped troops had come from Chamdo, passed Khata and advanced towards Nayu. Thus a threat was developing against Longju and Taksing of Subansiri Division. On September 26, we reported the completion of the motor road to Le, the mule track from Le to Thagla, the setting up of mortar and MMG posts on the Thagla Ridge and the establishment of a post at Damtsang Rong opposite Bumla which constituted a threat to Tawang itself. The Dalai Lama's sources brought information about this time that there was a general movement forward of Chinese troops from the rear areas, e.g. Chamdo, Nagchuka, etc. So the Chinese were building up fast besides trying to subvert our tribals in NEFA.

From September 10 to September 20, there was a lull in the Dhola sector. Excepting one incident which had taken place when the Chinese had fired two grenades into our positions and had, in an exchange of fire, suffered a number of casualties, there was no activity on this front at all and few Chinese could be seen by the men of the 9 Punjab. The lull was so deceptive that I remember Thapar one day remarking that he did not expect any serious fighting to break out. There might not have been any fighting if we had not taken any steps to oust the Chinese from our territory and had also left the river belt as no-man's-land as we had been forced to do earlier in Longju. Then other Longjus would have cropped up all along the NEFA border and other borders also. So I contradicted Thapar and stressed that it would be unwise to take the Chinese intentions lightly and we must not forget their military concentration across the border. If the Chinese were not visible at Nyamkachu, that was probably only to create a false impression on our troops. Thapar told me that as soon as his

Brigade was assembled at Nyamkachu he was going to ask for written orders, because it was possible that if he did not fortify himself with it he might later be blamed in case we suffered a reverse. Next day at Raghu Ramaiah's meeting, Thapar asked for a written order. To my mind, this was quite unnecessary. In such a case it was hardly necessary for the Government to give a written order to the Army Chief, because the latter had participated in the decisions that had been taken and no decision had been foisted on him against his opposition. Indeed, every movement was initiated by the Army Headquarters and who else would know where the different battalions of the Brigade were, what were the deficiencies in arms and equipment and other supplies, how these were to be made up, what would be the actual defensive position when the battalions reached Nyamkachu, which particular sectors would be guarded, what were the arrangements for protecting and securing the rear of the Nyamkachu front, etc. All this was a matter entirely for the Army Headquarters or the Corps or the Division to decide. This was not a matter in which either the Defence Minister or anybody else could interfere. Nor did anybody ever try to do it. We came into the picture only in respect of our respective fields. I had given an intelligence summary day by day. The Air Chief was, of course, vitally concerned, because he had to carry a lot of supplies first to Lumpu, then to Sirkhim and then further forward to Tsangdhar. The Foreign Secretary gave an account of the correspondence that was taking place with China and about the various proposals or counter-proposals. The Defence representative, Sarin, helped in every way possible to get financial sanctions and process proposals through other departments when this was necessary. The Defence Minister or the Minister of State also tried to be as helpful as possible on various matters of administration and to arrange with the Railways to give immediate transport facilities to the Army. When it was reported that our build-up was being delayed because of want of sufficient numbers of porters, the Foreign Secretary immediately ordered the NEFA Administration to mobilise all their porters to meet any needs. From the IB we sent an

Army Officer from our staff (Col. Charanji Lal) to organise a labour corps to lift army supplies from Lumpu to Nyamkachu. Actually, even on October 20, whilst the Chinese had already broken the Dhola front, our porters were still carrying the supplies to the Nyamkachu river to the Punjab and Grenadier posts. We all worked like a team to help the Army in every way possible because everyone realised that fighting the Chinese in that terrain was going to be a very tough job. The COAS, the CGS or the DMO, whom I used to meet frequently apart from attending the DM's meeting, never gave me the impression that the task given to the Army or undertaken by it was beyond its capacity. Actually, it was never mentioned that the Indian Army would not be in a position to oust the Chinese from this position. On the contrary there was a good amount of enthusiasm about this in the Army Headquarters, and the officiating CGS, Dhillon, deserves praise for the speed he displayed in scouring men and materials from all over India and collecting them at Tezpur.

About September 25, I got the information that the brigade which was to complete its assembly on the Nyamkachu front on the 29th was far behind the schedule and there was no possibility of movements being completed by that date and they might take another fortnight to do so. Before that day's meeting started I mentioned this to the Minister of State and asked him to ascertain from the Army Chief what was the actual position. We were then assured that two battalions had reached and the third was on the way and the movement would be completed by the 29th as promised. But Sen probably had doubts and so he decided to fly to Tezpur two days later to ascertain the actual position. Krishna Menon returned from the United Nations on September 30. Another crucial meeting was held on October 1. On this day Sen, who had by then returned from Tezpur, stated that Corps Commander Umrao Singh had neglected to carry out his orders; the battalions which were to move to the Nyamkachu front were still far behind and so the movement had not been completed as per the schedule given to him. Hence there was no prospect of our taking action on October 2 as previously planned. Umrao Singh

had mentioned to him that he had a plan, but he had not disclosed it. Sen said that it was impossible to work with Umrao Singh and a change of command should take place immediately; otherwise the Government might be let down at a critical moment. The Army Chief agreed. This meeting brought disappointment to all of us. We were all expecting to see some spectacular moves by our Army the next day to oust the Chinese from this area, thereby washing away the humiliations and insults we had suffered at Chinese hands since 1959.

In the afternoon, Sarin and myself were called by the Defence Minister to his room where Thapar was also present. There the Defence Minister disclosed that he and Thapar had decided to form a new Corps with Headquarters at Tezpur and put Kaul in charge. I did not know that Kaul had returned to Delhi the previous day. Both Sarin and I had our misgivings not because we felt that Kaul was in any way incompetent to hold the charge but because we felt that everything was not all right at the Army Headquarters and, if Kaul was coming back from leave, he should come as the CGS and Sen with his ability, experience and initiative would be able to complete the movements required in the shortest possible time. I even suggested that, instead of forming a separate Corps, the Army Commander might himself take charge of this front. But Thapar said that Sen had a very big Command and he could not be tied up in one corner. Trouble might break out in other sectors and these would also require Sen's attention. Regarding our suggestion that Kaul should come back as CGS, both Thapar and Krishna Menon thought that in any case the operations were going to last for a short time and Kaul would come back to his post of CGS after completing the operations in NEFA.

That evening I met Kaul at his house and enquired whether he had agreed to take up the command of the IV Corps which was yet to be formed. He replied in the affirmative and was quite enthusiastic about it. I expressed my doubts and said that I would have liked him to be at the Army Headquarters. We talked of alternatives, but all the names that I mentioned he rejected as unfit. There was no doubt that Kaul had his ambitions, for

which he could not be blamed. If he could win this battle against the Chinese, he would be able to silence all criticism against his appointment as the CGS and would be able to stake a claim for promotion as the COAS in future. Kaul informed me that he was going to interview the Prime Minister that night and he would come and see me after the meeting. He did and he told me that the Prime Minister had told him that this work was very important from India's point of view and he trusted that Kaul would be able to remove the Chinese threat. Kaul had told the Prime Minister that even if he could not throw the Chinese out completely, he would maul them severely by October 10. Kaul looked very confident and happy after this meeting. He had nearly reached the top and a spectacular success in a battle with the Chinese would clear all the impediments on the way. He got this chance and he seized it. There was no question of thrusting an assignment on him against his wishes and best judgment. Never did he question, at least in my presence, the wisdom of raising a new Corps nor give any sign of his diffidence in commanding it. He willingly accepted the offer and he never had any doubts about his own ability to produce results. I do not think Pandit Nehru had been consulted or had any hand in this appointment, which was a decision taken by Krishna Menon and Thapar. The Prime Minister subsequently approved of it. Sen also approved of the appointment and promised his level best to help setting up the new Corps on its feet. Kaul rejoined on October 2 as the CGS and was busy next day to get a grasp of the situation. Hooja and I spent considerable time with him briefing him on intelligence about the Chinese strength and dispositions. I also placed our local officer at Chuthangmo and also Col. Charanji Lal at his disposal on the front so that he could employ them on any intelligence work that was needed.

Kaul arrived at Tezpur on October 4 and he found that excepting the 9 Punjab no other battalion had till then crossed the Hatung La Pass into the Nyamkachu valley. The build-up of even the 9 Punjab was not complete. The advance elements of the 2 Rajput and the 1/9 Gurkha were still at Lumpu; their rears were far behind. (We had been told on or about September 19 or

20 that the Rajputs had already reached the Nyamkachu river and had taken up their position, and we were again told on the 27th or 28th that the Gurkhas had also reached.) Kaul moved on to Tawang and then to Zimithang and Lumpu. At Zimithang our Intelligence Officer met him and gave him a full picture of the Chinese strength south of the ridge—which was then estimated at two battalions. The Chinese were well-equipped with artillery, heavy mortars and recoilless guns. This officer thereafter remained with Kaul as had been instructed by us. With his characteristic speed and vigour, Kaul moved the battalions forward in record time, and by the 9th had them all positioned on the river front. He was still striving to keep to his time table, i.e. October 10 for the D-day. It is now clear that the subsequent difficulties that took place regarding supplies, equipment, etc. resulted from this quick movement over territory which was not fit for vehicular or even mule traffic and where every load had to be man-handled. The Air Force gave splendid support both at Lumpu and Tsangdhar, but at the latter place the terrain was difficult and a large amount of supplies fell into the ravine and was lost. Kaul then moved on to Nyamkachu and both he and Dalvi in their books have given graphic descriptions of the various places which they visited at great risk sparing themselves no physical strain. Kaul was the first senior officer to visit this front. Even the Division Commander, Naranjan Prasad, had not gone there earlier. Kaul had gone fully briefed from Headquarters. He had by then been the CGS for nearly two years and had full knowledge of the weaknesses and strength of the Indian Army and its shortages. He also had first-hand knowledge of the Chinese army at which he had had a close look in Korea. He knew enough about their equipment and tactics and their guerrilla training and acclimatisation in the Tibetan plateau. So he had gone there with his eyes open. He found many defects in the dispositions of our units and their locations and pointed these out to the Brigade Commander.

Kaul then took a good look round and compared his own dispositions with those of the Chinese. He spent three to four nights at Nyamkachu and between him, the Division Commander and

the Brigade Commander they could have altered the positions of the troops, if they considered the present positions to be tactically wrong. Except the fact that the Brigade and the Division Commanders might have told Kaul that with the strength at their disposal and the state of supplies it would not be practicable to drive out the Chinese, they did not then raise the question that Nyamkachu valley itself was indefensible. At this time we got information that the Chinese were moving 300 guns and mortars towards Tsona and they could be utilised against Bumla and Tawang. Army Headquarters informed Kaul at once.

On October 9, a Company of 9 Punjab crossed the river and occupied the Tsenjong position to the right flank of the Chinese who had not yet occupied it. This was a most crucial move, because what followed later can be ascribed as directly emanating from it. Kaul has argued that he was not responsible for this move. But this cannot be accepted. Dalvi says that the move was made with Kaul's approval and in his presence. Kaul and the Division Commander were both present when the move took place. In fact, they had arrived at the front three days earlier and Dalvi was all along with them. He could not have initiated this move behind Kaul's back. Moreover, if Kaul or Naranjan Prasad thought that this move was wrong, they should have stopped it. Dalvi also does not claim that he protested against this move. If he had, it was unlikely that the Corps Commander would have forced him to make it. So it follows that this move was made with due deliberation by them and was part of a plan which they had conceived. The strengthening of the Tsangley position and the location of a platoon to cover Karpola were also part of the same plan. They seemed to have been well-conceived.

The Chinese reaction to the Indian occupation of Tsenjong was violent. The Chinese fiercely attacked the Indian position the next morning. The Tsenjong battle has been described in detail both by Kaul and Dalvi. The first two attacks were beaten back with heavy losses to the enemy. Ultimately the Chinese brought in nearly a battalion strength. The Company Commander wanted reinforcements and also covering fire by artillery and mortars. Artillery and mortar support was not given on the

ground that it was beyond their range. Reinforcement was also not sent because a general flare-up might follow and, according to these officers, the Indian build-up was still not strong enough to be able to sustain a large-scale battle all along the line. This was a most unfortunate decision for which all the three, Kaul, Naranjan Prasad and Dalvi, were responsible. The Company had not been sent on a guerrilla or commando operation. It was sent forward to hold a position which would be an extension of the position which was being held along the river and it was a good tactical position. In the circumstances, it was indefensible to send a Company forward without planning for sending reinforcements if the enemy attacked and tried to isolate it. There was no doubt that this failure to support a unit in distress lowered these officers in the estimation of all junior officers, NCOs and men. These officers themselves were also demoralised by their own inaction and thereafter they could do nothing right and completely forfeited the trust of their men.

Up to October 9, Kaul's telegrams from Tezpur, Tawang and Nyamkachu river used to be extremely optimistic. He gave details of his build-up and also his plans and there was no indication in any of them that he could not fulfil the tasks which he had accepted. Indeed, at the Minister's morning meetings we got the impression that everything was going according to plan and soon we might see the Chinese speeding behind the Thagla Ridge.

But the Chinese reaction and their determination to expel the Indians from their side of the Nyamkachu river had apparently unnerved all the three officers. No longer were they confident of their ability to expel the Chinese with the resources at their command. They were even doubtful of their ability to hold their present positions on the Nyamkachu river now that they had disclosed their hand by making the first move. Kaul says in his book :

> "I had now seen with my own eyes the superior resources of the Chinese in the battle that morning, and the untenability of our position in Dhola area located in a hollow. I was also advised by my Division Commander that I should go

to Delhi and ask the Army Headquarters and the Government not to press us to 'expel' the Chinese from this area, a task which was far beyond our capacity and that we should occupy a position which could be better placed *vis-a-vis* the enemy. Dalvi also had the same view. I agreed both with the Divisional and the Brigade Commanders. I then told Naranjan Prasad that the instructions to drive the enemy back were to be held in abeyance till I returned from Delhi. In the meantime, he was to hold the present position."

Kaul sent a most frightfully alarming telegram to the Army Headquarters saying that he had himself seen the Chinese positions and their reactions. He felt that the Chinese were vastly superior to the Indians at this place. They were heavily equipped with artillery, mortars and MMG's. They could overrun Indian positions easily and in that case Tawang and Bomdila and even the plains of Assam north of Brahmaputra would be threatened. Kaul, therefore, wanted a re-thinking on this matter and said that he was coming to Delhi to acquaint the Government with the exact position and get fresh directives. The message came at about midnight. The COAS took the message at once to Krishna Menon. I was also immediately summoned. Thapar expressed surprise that Kaul's confidence expressed so far had suddenly turned to despair. It seemed that all that we had been working for during the month since September 9 was coming to naught. This decision of Kaul to leave Nyamkachu on October 10 when our troops had suffered a reverse and when it was apprehended that the Chinese might even follow up their success by launching further attacks, unfortunately appeared to the men to be the outcome of panic and they suspected that Kaul was running away. This was not at all correct but this impression remained in the minds of the men and they never forgot nor forgave. Kaul walked the whole night on the 10th and unfortunately got lung infection on the way. He was picked up by a helicopter from Sirkhim and landed at Tezpur and from there was flown to Delhi where he reached at about 10 p.m. on October 11.

We all met at the Prime Minister's residence at about 10-30 p.m.

that night. Amongst those who were present were the Defence Minister, General Thapar, Air Marshal Engineer, the Cabinet Secretary, the Foreign Secretary, Sarin and myself. The Officiating CGS Dhillon and Lt.-Gen. Sen were also present. With the help of a map Kaul explained the position of Indian and Chinese troops at Nyamkachu and, for nearly half-an-hour, he argued with great strength and conviction that not only was it impossible to drive the Chinese across the Thagla Ridge with his existing resources but it would be impossible to hold the Nyamkachu river front. He said that in spite of his best efforts it had been impossible for him to make all the logistic arrangements; the men did not have sufficient reserve supplies and even clothes and digging instruments. The Air Force was doing its best but much of its effort was being wasted because of wrong drops, for which it could not be blamed, because the terrain was most unsuitable for receiving air drops. The Chinese sitting at Thagla saw all our positions clearly. They knew exactly where we were; and whilst they had gone completely underground by digging tunnels, the Indian troops were lying exposed on the surface. He had a good word of praise for the Intelligence Officer, L.D. Kumar, at this place, who, he said, had all the information at his finger tips and had a good range of sources who could bring in information from across the Thagla Ridge within a few hours. Kaul had gained a good insight into the Chinese dispositions and strength. He estimated that the Chinese had nearly one Division, of which two brigades were south of Thagla Ridge and one was in reserve on the Le-Marmang Sector. They were better equipped with semi-automatic rifles, mortars, MMG's and even heavy artillery, and their communications were good. He further said that there was persistent Chinese propaganda of *Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai* asking the Indian troops to go back from the territory which belonged to the Chinese and not to put up with the difficulties which an exploiting government had forced on them. This, he added, was also having an effect on the morale of the Indian troops, who felt that the Chinese did not really want to fight and so they did not think it necessary to exert themselves to prepare their defences. Kaul further argued that with the present standard and scale at which rations were supplied

to the Indian Army, there was no chance of our ever being able to face the Chinese at any place where the communications would be long and difficult as it would be impossible to bring all the commissariat forward. He said that the Chinese requirements had been reduced to the minimum. Diet consisted of only four or five items as compared to about 25 items of Indian diet; clothing was simple (cotton-padded jacket and trousers and woollen boots) and also consisted of about six or seven pieces of garments only as against the elaborate uniform of the Indian soldier. He said that the Indian soldiers had to be re-equipped and re-trained and their food habits changed before they could meet the Chinese on equal terms. Otherwise, our supply system would never be able to meet the requirements of a very mobile war on a difficult terrain.

All that Kaul said was sense and yet extremely disheartening. For the first time since September 10 we were told bluntly that the Chinese could not be expelled from our territory in the Nyamkachu valley with our existing resources and that even the Nyamkachu river position could not be held. When the Prime Minister enquired whether there were any questions, I asked Kaul whether he was of the view that the Chinese could attack the Indians at any time and place and effect a breakthrough. He firmly replied in the affirmative. Dhillon was so upset that he could not help remarking aloud: "He has developed cold feet." The Prime Minister then said he did not want the troops to commit suicide and he asked for suggestions as to what should be done in the circumstances. Sen, however, raised his voice of protest and said that he did not agree with Kaul that the Nyamkachu position could not be held; according to him, it could be held and it should be held. There was a brigade there, and a brigade constituted a strong fighting group and could in defence hold out against a Division. In the circumstances which Kaul had explained, the offensive action against the Chinese might be held in abeyance, but he saw no reason why this particular position should be given up. Thapar entirely concurred with Sen. We all heaved a sigh of relief. The Prime Minister then said (and I am quoting his words as far as I can remember): "I do not want the troops to commit suicide and I do not want to put them to

unnecessary risks. But in all fighting there is some risk and that has to be accepted. If it is considered that this position can be held, it should be held and there is no reason why we should retreat and yield further territory to the Chinese." So the decision was taken that the Nyamkachu position would be held but no offensive action would be taken to oust the Chinese from the northern bank. The meeting broke up after midnight. The Defence Minister did not speak at all.

There has been a lot of criticism by the public, in the Press, in Parliament and by even writers like Kaul and Dalvi that Nehru had taken a political decision, having been cornered by the Opposition, to force the Army to fight in this unsuitable terrain. This criticism is absolutely baseless. Politics did not enter the question of disposition of troops in this theatre at any stage. No doubt the Government wanted the Chinese to be cleared from our territory—and which Government would not do so? Not only the Government, the Parliament, the entire country also wanted it; even the Army had the same feeling. But, as events have shown, it was found that this was not immediately possible. The next question that arose was whether we should stop the Chinese at that point, or we should withdraw at their threat giving them further ground. The opinion of the Government, Parliament, the people was unanimous that no further ground should be given; and on this point also the Army as represented by the Chief of Army Staff and the Army Commander was of the view that this position could and should be held. So, if the Prime Minister had at that stage given a decision that the army should be pulled back, he would have gone not only against the wish of the entire country but against the advice of the Chief of Army Staff and the Army Commander. The decision to defend the Nyamkachu position was a military decision and no political influence had intervened in that decision. It would be entirely incorrect to allege that the decision to stand fast and fight at Nyamkachu, instead of allowing the army to choose a better ground further south, was in any way influenced by politics in the sense that the Prime Minister was forced into this position by the Opposition Parties.

A day later the Prime Minister left for Colombo. He was seen

off at the airport by Krishna Menon and Kaul. During the intervening day, Kaul had had further meetings with the Chief of the Army Staff and the Army Commander and he had also spent some time in his own office, that is of the GCS. At the airport Kaul is reported to have assured the Prime Minister that he would be able to clear the Chinese from the Nyamkachu valley. There were responsible persons present who had heard him say so. There were several newspaper reporters present naturally wanting to know what decision had been taken. So after leaving Kaul and Krishna Menon and before boarding the plane, the Prime Minister walked over to the Press Correspondents and, when asked by them what was being done about the enemy, he said, "I have ordered the Army to turn out the Chinese." When questioned further, he said that he could not fix the date; it was for the army to decide. Much has been read into this very simple statement and much criticism has been heaped on Pandit Nehru for giving an impracticable order to the Army, contravening his own earlier decision. It is surprising that Kaul himself has also criticised this statement of the Prime Minister and has even misrepresented the decision that had been taken earlier. It has been suggested by political opponents and certain writers that this statement of the Prime Minister provoked the Chinese attack on October 20. But, as the chain of events had shown from June, 1962, onwards, the continuous pressing forward of Chinese troops to the frontier, the reinforcement of Tsethang, Tsona, Lhuntze Dzong, Sangacholing, i.e. all along the NEFA frontier and Ladakh, and the open threat which the Chinese had given out regarding their intention to come into NEFA, all proved that this confrontation was due to come soon, and it came at a time chosen by the Chinese when their preparations were complete. No statement by the Prime Minister could have precipitated the Chinese action. Similar statements had been made earlier also by the Defence Minister and by the External Affairs Ministry and, indeed, much stronger statements had been issued earlier, but they had not provoked any reaction of this type. The attack was a part of the general plan; it was not brought about due to any sudden provocation. But, if one is looking for any immediate

cause, it was the Indian attempt to occupy Tsenjong on October 9 to which the Chinese had reacted strongly. The Chinese had, as victors in that engagement, asked for Indian emissaries to be sent to Peking for talks on the 15th. But to this the Government of India would not agree unless the Chinese withdrew first. As observed by Mankekar, in his book *The Guilty Men of 1962*, Pandit Nehru's utterance on October 13 was a purely political statement. The significance lay in the fact that it announced an important change in the Government's policy. It was a general policy which applied to the whole frontier from Laddakh to NEFA and was not indicative of Dhola alone. Henceforward whenever the Chinese made encroachments on Indian territory the Indian Army would take action to oust them. How and where and when the Army would do it was for it to decide. The Army might even make a tactical withdrawal at some place. The Prime Minister was not going to stop it from doing that.

Mankekar has also rightly observed that those who think that this one statement brought about the earthquake forget that the Chinese had been all the time preparing for the contingency that, at some time or other the Indian Government would refuse to give any more ground and boldly confront them. This confrontation had actually started from the beginning of the year and since then the Chinese had been moving forward and reinforcing all their frontier posts. In June, the Chinese had clearly declared their intention of throwing out by force Indian troops who had encroached into their territory. Even Ayub had drawn up his master plan on that expectation. Of course, people in general or the newspapers and even Members of Parliament did not have all this information and so they could have been misled. But for Kaul, who had all this information and on which he had based his strategy, to accuse the Prime Minister of bad faith is quite inexcusable.

22 Dark October

On October 13, Kaul flew back to Tezpur via Calcutta. I was also travelling by the same plane. We talked all through the journey about his plans and the possible Chinese reactions. He looked depressed. It seemed to me that though he had accepted the decision of his superiors, Thapar and Sen, he was not morally convinced that this was the right decision, and was obsessed by the feeling that the Chinese could not be fought—at least in NEFA. I found that he had fairly high temperature and he complained that he had not slept and was tossing in his bed all night. But he was keen to go back to Tezpur to implement the new plan. Before we parted at Calcutta he invited me to accompany him to the front and I agreed. The arrangement was that as soon as he would send me a message I would join him at Tezpur or Tawang. But this opportunity never came.

After the Tsenjong incident, the Chinese moved forward a good deal of reinforcement across the Thagla Ridge. It is not correct that before October 10 the Chinese had massed two Brigades below Thagla. They had just about a Brigade and that was why their reaction to our occupation of Tsenjong was rather belated. They deployed the new troops in battle positions. These movements and locations and even much of the armament was visible to the Indian army and it was quite apparent that the Chinese were preparing for an attack. Indeed, Brigadier Dalvi's account shows that he was quite aware of this Chinese build-up and, therefore, on October 13 and 14, had discussed the matter with the Commander, 4 Division, and had sent messages to the Corps Headquarters for permission to give up this position. He had also opposed the holding of the Tsangley position. Indeed, Kaul's dash to Delhi to plead that not only the attack from but also the defence of the Nyamkachu valley was not possible had created a

complacent attitude in the mind of the Brigade Commander and, instead of making quick preparations to meet the imminent Chinese threat, he went on sending repeated appeals to be allowed to withdraw. And the troops continued to remain in the same unprepared state both ideologically and physically. There was very little of preparation of defence and digging of trenches for inter-communication, no redeployment for better defensive positions in depth and no attempt to prepare the troops mentally. Apparently Dalvi was so obsessed by the feeling that the Nyamkachu valley could not be defended, and so sure that the troops would be withdrawn that he did nothing to prepare the defences.

According to Kaul, on return from Delhi, he issued revised instructions to the 4 Division to hold the Nyamkachu front and even the position at Tsangley, if possible. However, the reports of further reinforcements, the repeated pleas from the Brigade and the Division Commanders to be allowed to withdraw and even the attitude of Corps Headquarters staff and the Inspector General of Assam Rifles, must have exercised a very depressing influence on Kaul's judgment, particularly when he was not physically too well. So on the 16th, he sent another message to the Eastern Command and the Army Headquarters repeating all the arguments which he had used in his message of October 10 from the Nyamkachu front as well as in his discussion before the Prime Minister and maintained that the Nyamkachu position was untenable and he should be allowed to withdraw from that position and re-group along Tsangdhar, Karpo La and Hatung La. He also asked for the withdrawal of the Khinzemane post of which the Indians had been in occupation since 1959. Though in *The Untold Story* Kaul has mentioned the visit by the Defence Minister, the Chief of Army Staff and the Army Commander to his Headquarters on October 17, he has omitted to mention that the visit was provoked by the depressing message that he had sent the previous day. Krishna Menon and Thapar came to my residence at about 11 o'clock on the 16th night and showed me the telegram. It was apparent that Kaul, who had like a good soldier, accepted the decision of his military superiors on October 11, was now scared at the reported massing of Chinese

troops south of Thagla Ridge and had, therefore, revived his earlier objections to holding this position. It was decided that we should fly to Tezpur that very night and find out what new difficulties had arisen which had forced Kaul to ask for a change of the orders so soon after leaving Delhi. The Defence Minister accompanied by the Chief of Army Staff, Sarin and myself left Delhi at 1 o'clock in the morning on October 17, picked up Sen at Lucknow and arrived at Tezpur at about 5-30 a.m. We were received at the airport by Kaul and taken to the Corps Headquarters. A long discussion ensued in his map room and Kaul again reiterated all his deficiencies and argued that the Nyamkachu position was not tenable. Krishna Menon mentioned that Indian public opinion would not tolerate any further surrender of Indian territory to the Chinese and, therefore, no further Chinese advance into India should be allowed. The Tsangley position was also important according to Thapar and Sen because it not only commanded the trijunction of Bhutan, India and Tibet, but also covered three subsidiary passes which the Chinese could use to come straight to Tsangdhar to the rear of the Indian positions. The atmosphere in which this meeting was conducted was depressing indeed. The members of the Corps Headquarters were all for immediate withdrawal though this, in effect, would mean running away at the sight of the Chinese army. The Inspector General of Assam Rifles went on arguing in favour of withdrawing from all the new posts he had occupied that year. His argument was that these posts would not be tenable in winter, though the real reason was that by then the news of the arrival of Chinese forces all along the frontier had filtered down to the Assam Rifles also causing jitters as these posts had no hope of getting any military support. Aided by these officers, Kaul marshalled in a very plausible way his arguments in favour of an immediate withdrawal. He maintained that the Chinese troops were vastly superior to the Indians in every respect—numbers, equipment, training, supplies, weapons and morale—and so the latter had no chance against the former. The discussions lasted for nearly three hours. When all arguments had been exhausted, I suggested to Krishna Menon that we civilians should withdraw from the map room and a decision as to what

should be done at the Nyamkachu front, i.e. whether we should modify our positions or completely withdraw, should be taken by the Generals themselves and it should be entirely a military decision, free from any civilian interference. Also in our absence, the Generals would be able to talk without any inhibitions. Krishna Menon would not easily agree to my suggestion. He apprehended that if we withdrew, in his absence the Generals might decide to desert the Nyamkachu front and allow the Chinese to occupy several hundred sq. miles more of Indian territory, which would not only affect the position of the McMahon Line but would also have a very bad effect on Bhutan and on the tribals in NEFA. Further, Indian public opinion would not stand our Government giving away more territory in face of Chinese threats without a fight. But I was also adamant and I said that all these arguments had been repeated many times and the Generals were also aware of the prevailing public feeling but we must not allow their final decision to be swayed by these considerations and so we must withdraw and the issue should be settled by the military officers alone. Very reluctantly Krishna Menon gave in and he, Sarin and I came away to the army mess, where we waited for two hours sipping coffee. I took this opportunity to make an up-to-date assessment of the situation with the help of our Intelligence Staff at Tezpur. They had by then got a full account of the Chinese reinforcements and equipment that had arrived both south and north of Thagla Ridge. It appeared that the Chinese had about four battalions south of Thagla and two Companies in the vicinity of Khinzemane where they were digging in for defence. They had also moved at least a battalion to Shao and nearly another battalion to the subsidiary passes between Thagla and Karpola II. The Chinese were also holding the rear positions between Thagla and Marmang in depth. After nearly two hours, we were invited by the Chief of Army Staff to come to the operations room and we went back. He informed us that they had decided to hold the Nyamkachu front and the Tsangley sector. He also informed us that the shortages in equipment and arms would be immediately made up and he would supply a large number of LMG'S to counter Chinese automatic weapons. Another battalion (Garhwal) would

be sent to hold the rear from Hatung La to Lumpu. He also informed us that a Brigade strength was being built up for the defence of Tawang independently of the Nyamkachu front and that one battalion had already reached there in addition to the Sikh Light Infantry which had remained at Tawang. Sen suggested a few more defensive moves and Kaul accepted them. So the meeting ended in a buoyant mood with wishes of good luck all round. We came back to the mess at about 11 a.m. and had our wash and breakfast. We left in the afternoon and at sunset were back at Delhi. Krishna Menon went immediately to report to Pandit Nehru who had by then returned from Colombo.

So the decision taken on the 17th to hold the Nyamkachu front and the Tsangley sector was again a military decision unfettered by any political and other considerations and this time in the absence of any civilians. But after all war is only an extension of politics and if there are no political considerations there cannot be any war and these very experienced military commanders including Kaul understood the political implications fully but had taken a military decision without any political pressure. When they decided to hold the Nyamkachu line, they must have been convinced that this could be done and, if that was their assessment, they would be untrue to themselves if they caved in to the demands of subordinate officers for withdrawal. Hearing Kaul's arguments that morning I myself was in doubt whether the defence of Nyamkachu was possible in the circumstances described, and, I am sure, if the Generals had decided that day that the position was, in fact, untenable, the Government certainly would not have forced the army to hold on to it and face a disaster. Both Pandit Nehru and Krishna Menon were experienced politicians and knew that the political repercussions of a military reverse at the hands of the Chinese would be far more severe than the criticisms that might be levelled at the Government for allowing another withdrawal. Dalvi in his book has even insinuated that the particular positions he was to hold were dictated by civilians and politicians. As this narrative would show such an allegation is quite baseless. No civilian officer higher than the Assistant Central Intelligence Officer and the Revenue Officer at Chuthangmo had visited Nyamkachu

and we at Headquarters did not have any clear idea about the various features of the ground, where the so-called log bridges were, where exactly the different units were located except from the maps shown to us by the Army Headquarters and we were in no position to suggest any moves. Even the tactical advantage of holding Tsangley or Tsenjong had been assessed by the Military Officers and we could hardly say anything one way or the other.

I noticed that Kaul was quite ill. He was running a temperature. He had breathing difficulty even during the morning's discussions and his eyes were red and sore. I mentioned this to Krishna Menon and said that Kaul did not look to be physically fit to command the Corps in operations. But Krishna Menon and Thapar said that Kaul, who had a tough constitution, would soon get over this ailment. But that very night we received a message at Delhi from the Army Medical Officer at Tezpur that Kaul was bedridden and had much difficulty in breathing and he suggested Kaul's immediate evacuation to Delhi as the humid climate of Tezpur would aggravate his illness. Krishna Menon and Thapar decided to send Col. Lal, the Chief Medical Specialist at Delhi Cantonment Hospital, to Tezpur next morning by a special plane and to evacuate Kaul if Lal felt that this step was necessary. Kaul was evacuated on the 18th afternoon. Many unkind words were said and insinuations levelled against him and some of his enemies even went to the ridiculous length of glibly talking that Kaul had shown the white flag and had run away from NEFA and was under arrest in his quarters. It was exceedingly mean on anybody's part to make such malicious allegations against this brave officer. I met Kaul immediately after he had arrived. He could hardly talk and he was running high temperature and was on oxygen. His stay and treatment at Delhi, however, helped him to recover quickly.

During the period Kaul was confined to bed, I used to meet him every day, sometimes twice a day, and give him a full picture of the situation as seen from our angle. Kaul also used to get telephone calls and WT messages two or three times every day from his staff at Tezpur and issued orders from his bed. I remember on October 19, when I was present in his room, a message came from

Tezpur to the effect that the Brigade and Division Commanders were not only unwilling to send reinforcements to Tsangley but had also recommended its evacuation. They had again recommended withdrawal from the river-bed. Kaul was upset and angry and he very firmly issued instructions that not only the Tsangley position should be held but another Company should be sent to reinforce it. He also very firmly ordered that the Nyamkachu position should be held at all costs and the Chinese must not be allowed to break that line. Actually, on the 19th another fully equipped Chinese battalion had crossed the Thagla Ridge and had taken up positions poised for attack. That evening the Chinese in some strength had openly infiltrated through the gaps on our front and had disappeared in the jungles behind our line and occupied the hilltops in our rear. They also had infiltrated towards Tsangdhar. Another group came through Karpola on the Thagla Ridge and took positions round the Tsangley post denying it any chance to manoeuvre. They had also moved up and nearly surrounded the Khinzemane post. All this was happening within the view and knowledge of the Indian troops. So the Brigade Commander should have realised that an all-out attack was imminent. The question of withdrawal at that stage did not arise. It was a pity that, instead of preparing for a last ditch fight, this wrangle should have continued between the Brigade and Division on one side and the Corps Commander on the other. The result was that, when the attack came, the local commanders were caught in two minds and had not even prepared any defence plans. In Army Headquarters we even heard the talk that the troops on Nyamkachu were not digging themselves in and preparing their defences as the Chinese had done but remained exposed. The Brigade Commander was obsessed from the beginning with the feeling, that he had been given an impossible task. All the time he was arguing that he could not do it and hoping against hope that his arguments would ultimately prevail. This was known to all officers and had percolated down to the ranks. Consequently their morale was low. A glimpse of this attitude of mind comes up quite often in the defence that Dalvi has written of himself. After all a decision had been taken by the Army Headquarters to defend

Nyamkachu and the Division and Brigade Commanders should have got on with the job instead of arguing that it could not be done, setting an example of inaction and indiscipline to the troops and spreading the mood of pessimism and "can't be done" all round.

On the early morning of October 20, the Chinese struck with great force at the weak Rajput position near Dhola Bridge. The Rajputs fought valiantly but were overcome within an hour and the Chinese swamped into Tsangdhar overcoming the Gurkhas. The Chinese who had infiltrated the previous afternoon behind our position also caused confusion all round. They were in occupation of our dropping zone at Tsangdhar before the Brigade Headquarters could withdraw to it. The Chinese troops, who had the previous day crossed Karpola, attacked the Tsangley position, and after severe fighting the Indian troops had to withdraw via Bhutan. On the left flank the Chinese attacked the Khinzemane post and overran it after a couple of hours' fighting. There were only a few survivors who withdrew to tell the story at Zimithang that afternoon. A part of the Chinese troops which occupied Khinzemane followed the Indian survivors and were in the vicinity of Zimithang that evening. Another contingent then came along the northern bank of Nyamkachu to take on the 9 Punjab and the Grenadiers. In the meantime, after capturing Tsangdhar, the Chinese had moved east and come to the southern slopes of Hatungla. The main positions of the 9 Punjab and the Grenadiers were not touched at all till the afternoon when they were attacked both from the front and the rear by enemy who had already infiltrated all round their positions. When the 9 Punjab and the Grenadiers wanted to withdraw they found that their rear was cut and there was a rout. The Brigade Commander had lost contact with his formations from the morning and also with the Divisional Headquarters. Thereafter nothing was known about him till the Chinese announced his capture. There was complete confusion all round, and except that Dhola and Khinzemane posts had fallen, no one at Divisional Headquarters knew what had happened to the rest of the brigade. The Chinese, of course, falsely announced that to counter massive Indian attacks, they had been forced to counter-

attack in self-defence and had occupied Dhola and Khinzemane posts. At Delhi we spent an uneasy night hoping against hope that though Dhola and Khinzemane had fallen, our troops had withdrawn to new positions south of Hatungla and would be holding the Chinese advance.

On the morning of October 21, Naranjan Prasad left his Headquarters at Zimithang telling the Intelligence Officer, in whose house he was staying, that he was going forward to see the Indian army positions of which he had no information. But by the time he reached Lumpu he found that the Chinese had already reached its outskirts and were visible all round the place. The Chinese, however, had expected strong Indian defences at Lumpu and so they delayed their occupation of that place till their main body of troops came forward. Naranjan Prasad then decided that there was no point in going forward and being taken a prisoner and so withdrew via Shakti to Tawang, blowing up the Shakti Bridge after crossing it. All the mass of supplies, which had been airborne to Lumpu, fell intact in Chinese hands. One IAF helicopter on a supply-dropping mission was hit by Chinese bullets and crashed.

The Chinese followed their close fighting tactics, which Lin Piao had suggested in his famous directive of 1961, and the strategy and the tactics which had been elaborated in the Plateau Warfare Booklet, of which I have given details in an earlier chapter . Their communications worked well. They had infiltrated behind our lines and had occupied high positions in our rear. They had struck with force at one point and had made a breakthrough. They chased the retreating Indian troops relentlessly and gave them no chance to re-form. They always left a lee-way for the enemy to retreat and then chased the retreating army rather than besiege a post and reduce it which would have cost them many casualties. Moreover, the various Indian posts were static and did not support each other. So the Chinese took each post by turn and brought up overwhelming strength against it and then went on to reduce the next one. For example the 9 Punjab holding an important sector did not fire a shot till the afternoon. The maximum strength deployed was no more than two regiments (brigades) and, if the

Indian troops had been properly handled and with determination, the Chinese could have been held and an orderly retreat to prepared positions could have been carried out, if necessary.

Our post at Zimithang kept us informed throughout October 20 about the fight and its probable course, but could not give any details as nothing was known at the Divisional Headquarters. The fall of the Dhola and Khinzemane posts had been reported by the post and we had promptly passed on to the Army Headquarters whatever information had come in our net. The last message which we received from Kumar, the Intelligence Officer, was at 10.00 hours on the 21st. In this he mentioned that the Divisional Headquarters had withdrawn and was making for Shakti and so he was also closing down the station and following the Division Commander. This was the last information which came from that area till we met the stragglers from the front at Tezpur two days later. The withdrawal of the army had become a rout and groups of troops made their way south to Assam plains or into Bhutan leaving the injured in the field. The Chinese followed the retreating troops closely and appeared everywhere on their heels.

The dimension of the disaster was known in Delhi on October 21 after Kumar's last message was received. By that time information had also come in through our post in Tawang that Chinese reinforcements had appeared opposite Bumla and a two-pronged attack on Tawang, one from Bumla in the north and the other from the west from the Chinese units following the Indian troops retreating from Nyamkachu was in the offing.

At the other end of NEFA, i.e. in the Walong Sector, the Chinese had brought up their troops to overlook Indian positions on the McMahon Ridge. The account of the battle in this sector has been given in detail by Johri in his book, *Chinese Invasion of Nefa* and I need not go into these details again. When Indian troops (Kumaonis) were moved to checkmate the Chinese positions, they were attacked and, after two days of bitter fighting, were ultimately ousted. But no rout took place here. The Chinese suffered heavy casualties and the Kumaonis retreated in order to occupy predetermined positions. Techu post was also attacked but from

here our withdrawing troops had to make a long and arduous trek to Hayuliang where they reached after a month. The Assam Rifles and Intelligence posts at Kibithoo had to be abandoned and the army then took up defence positions about five miles south of Kibithoo, i.e. six miles north of Walong. The Chinese also came into Longju from Tamadem and also penetrated some distance towards Taksing and captured the passes leading to Manigong, Gelling and Korbo.

Simultaneously with their attack on NEFA, the Chinese attacked the forward army positions in Ladakh east of Daulat Beg Oldi on October 20 and rendered the airfield at Daulat Beg Oldi unusable by firing on IAF planes arriving there for supply dropping. By the evening of that day five Indian army posts had been overcome. The stories of resistance at these posts will never be known, because there were few survivors. Later, all the other advance posts were withdrawn to Daulat Beg Oldi and then the entire battalion was withdrawn from Daulat Beg Oldi towards Panamik via Gapshan and Sasser Pass. The Galwan post, which had held out for nearly three months, was also overcome on October 22. Two days later the Chinese attacked the Sirijap and Yula posts on the Panggong Lake and one fell and the other was withdrawn to Phobrang. There was a pause for a few days and on the 27th the Chinese army concentrated in the southern sector and overran Changla, Jarala and Demchok. The Chinese, using their strategic advantage of inner lines, used the principle of concentration of force to defeat our detachments in detail. First they concentrated against the northern sector (between October 20-22), then against the central sector (between October 22-24) and finally against the southern sector (October 27-28).

By these manoeuvres the Chinese had thrown out the Indian troops practically all along the Ladakh border beyond their 1960 claimed line. Only a few pockets like Rezang hill, Gurung hill, etc. on the Chushul Sector, which was a strongly held position of the Indian army, were left. The Chinese did not advance any further beyond their claimed line. Unlike in Kameng Division of NEFA, the withdrawals in Ladakh were planned and there was no debacle. The army had to withdraw in the face of superior forces.

They withdrew in good formation and the bulk of the army remained in fighting formation. Isolated posts like Galwan, Sirijap, etc. were, of course, annihilated, but the bulk of the army remained a cohesive fighting unit, unlike what happened in the Dhola sector where all the four battalions disintegrated and disappeared.

Probably the reason for the better showing in Ladakh was that the army had been in these positions longer than in NEFA. Therefore, they were better acclimatised at these heights. The terrain was open and the enemy could be seen from a distance of miles. So there was no question of following any guerrilla tactics. There was also resolute leadership of Brigadier Grewal and, though armed in the same way as the units in Nyamkachu, the troops in Ladakh gave a good account of themselves. Their road communication was still more difficult than that in the Dhola Sector. Still the troops fought well and had to give in only to numerically superior forces which the Chinese could bring to any point on this front due to the good road system which they had systematically developed over the past few years.

On October 22, Thapar decided to go to Tezpur to make a proper assessment on the spot of the disaster that had overtaken our troops and invited me to join him. We flew to Tezpur and spent the whole afternoon and evening there. We met Sen, who had landed at Tawang in a helicopter that morning and had ordered that Tawang should be defended. Actually, the troops there, the Garhwalis and the Sikhs as well as an artillery unit, were well placed and dug in for the defence. The first day's battle below Bumla did not go in favour of the Chinese. The Sikhs put up heroic resistance and caused a good deal of damage to the enemy. But Naranjan Prasad, who was retreating from Zimithang via Tawang, apparently ordered that the troops should withdraw from Tawang and beyond the Jhang bridge on the Tawang Chu. It is this river parallel to which runs the now famous Sela Ridge. Sen said that he did not like to interfere with the orders of the Div. Commander in the field, though he felt that the Tawang position could be defended; and, as it was at the end of a motorable road, it was possible to send further reinforcements to this place. Also, a good part of the retreating Indian Army could be received

and collected there. Otherwise, they would either come into a vacuum or fall in Chinese hands. It was a shock to us to hear that Tawang was going to be given up. But nothing could be done to reverse the process then because the order to withdraw had already gone out to the units. Tawang was well stocked and the Sikhs particularly were well acclimatised and knew the ground well. The Garhwalis were also in good shape. The two battalions available at Tawang could, no doubt, hold out for several days, but if the Chinese pressed on with their attack they could not have held out indefinitely, unless adequate reinforcements could be sent in. If Tawang was held, it could have been possible to bring the air force into play by bombing the surrounding Chinese positions.

At the Corps Headquarters we met the first batches of Indian officers and NCO's who were retreating from the Nyamkachu front and had been lifted from Tawang by helicopters. From them we got our first detailed account of all that had happened on the 19th and the 20th on the Dhola sector and all the details of the fight and of the complete failure of communications almost from the start with the result that no unit knew what was happening elsewhere in the front. The accounts received from these officers and men were pieced together by Thapar and Sen and the complete picture became available before we returned that night. This account holds correct to this day and has not lost its validity in spite of the embellishments subsequently added by interested persons.

At about midnight Thapar and I left Tezpur and reached Delhi in the early hours of the morning. On the way I suggested to Thapar that he must now send another Commander to take charge of the IV Corps. My point was that Kaul was ill and, after the reverse which the troops had suffered at Nyamkachu and Tawang, he must be demoralised and it would be unwise to send him back to the Command. What was required was a man who was hundred per cent fit physically and whose morale was high and whom the troops would accept. I also hinted to Thapar that since Kaul's withdrawal from the Nyamkachu front on October 10 after the Tsenjong battle, rightly or wrongly, his prestige with the troops had suffered irrevocably and his return to the

command would not in any way help to raise their morale. Thapar enquired who should be put in charge, but I did not have any names to suggest as I did not know the seniority list of the army, and I said that he was the best judge about this and I was sure that the Government would agree. He said that Maj.-Gen. Harbaksh Singh was the next man and was immediately available and he was also a good soldier. But he was in two minds about making a change. He felt that this change would hurt Kaul's feelings seriously and his suggestion might not go well with the Defence Minister. Thapar said that Kaul was his friend and had done much good work as the CGS and so he was reluctant to do anything that might lower Kaul's position in any way. I told Thapar that there were few civilians in India who had stood by Kaul in the way I had done. Moreover, his assessment of the Dhola position had come out to be correct. But yet the country's interest came first and not the reputation of an individual officer. The country's interest demanded that a new General with a fresh mind should be sent to take charge of the situation. Thapar then enquired whether I was prepared to make this suggestion to Krishna Menon and I agreed.

On the 23rd morning, I met Krishna Menon and advised him that he must replace Kaul in the IV Corps. Krishna Menon's reaction was violent and he would not agree. He said Kaul was being unjustly attacked and his replacement at this time would add grist to the mill of his enemies. But I was persistent and at last he said that I should consult Kaul and find out his reactions. I went to see Kaul. He also vehemently opposed this suggestion, but ultimately, after a lot of arguments, he agreed, but on condition that he would be sent back to his Command as soon as he was declared medically fit. His argument was that so much uncharitable criticism had been levelled at him in private and in public during the past few days that, unless he went back to the front, he would not be able to rehabilitate himself either in the army circles or in the public eye. I came back and reported this to Thapar first and then to Krishna Menon. I also enlisted Sarin's assistance and he was also of the opinion that a new Corps Commander should be sent. Krishna Menon then himself went and talked to Kaul.

Ultimately Maj.-Gen. Harbaksh Singh was sent to Tezpur and he took over temporary Command of the IV Corps on or about October 25. In retrospect, I feel that when Kaul fell ill, he should have been immediately replaced and the IV Corps should not have been left without a functioning head at the crucial time. It is possible that the disaster that overtook us on the Nyamkachu front might have been averted and at least the rout could have been avoided if a resolute commander were at the spot.

With Khera I visited Tezpur again on the 25th. By that time a large number of officers and men withdrawing from the Nyamkachu front had arrived at the Corps Headquarters. We met and talked to as many of them as were made available. We heard a muffled criticism from the men that the officers had let them down and from the officers that they were caught unprepared as they were expecting to be withdrawn.

The Chinese were not content with occupying Tawang Subdivision which our army had vacated but pressed to the banks of Tawang Chu. There were reports of further Chinese reinforcements arriving, which clearly showed that the Chinese were building up for a further advance. The Chief of Army Staff assessed that he would require at least a Division strength in the Kameng Division to stop the Chinese advance beyond Tawang Chu to the Assam plains near Misamari. This force he was collecting from Nagaland and other places. But Chinese concentration across Sikkim posed a threat to the whole of eastern India and the COAS was in a quandary how to meet this danger. So, on October 26, we met in the Defence Minister's house in the evening to discuss this problem. Thapar, M.J. Desai, Sarin and myself attended. Thapar said that unless he was allowed to move troops from the Pakistan front he could not protect North Bengal and Sikkim. When the Defence Minister asked me for my views, I maintained that Ayub was on the prowl and, if our Punjab defences were weakened, he would certainly try to carry out his grand strategy of which we had given a detailed report a few months earlier. The question, however, was whether we should protect ourselves against the threat that was imminent or insure ourselves against a possible threat from another direction. We decided that a risk had to be

taken and, if the COAS had no other troops available, he should be permitted to withdraw troops from the Pakistan frontier. Krishna Menon walked over to the Prime Minister's residence to get his consent whilst we waited in his house. He returned after half-an-hour and informed us that the Prime Minister had also agreed that there was no other alternative but to take the risk. The Prime Minister had also told him that diplomatic effort should be made to contain Pakistan. Menon entrusted this work to M.J. Desai. The Air Force agreed to air-lift the troops from Chandigarh and Palam and moved the Division to Siliguri in record time.

By this time a wave of criticism swept the political field in India and a strong and persistent demand was raised that Krishna Menon should be relieved of the defence portfolio. There was criticism against Krishna Menon not only from the Opposition Parties but also from the Congress Party and within the Cabinet itself. All the pent up feeling against him in the army also raised its head and he was condemned by disgruntled army officers as being directly responsible for the disaster. On October 27, when I met Khera before the defence meeting, he told me that there was much dissatisfaction against Krishna Menon whom he considered unfit for holding the Defence portfolio, and suggested that he and I should go to the Prime Minister and suggest an immediate change. I was surprised at this because up till then Khera was known to be a great supporter of Krishna Menon. I told him that the Prime Minister could take his own counsel and I did not think that it was any part of my duty to go and advise the Prime Minister to change a Minister. Later that day, at the end of the Defence meeting, Krishna Menon detained me and informed me that he was going to resign because of the opposition in the country. I told him that so far as this particular operation was concerned he was in no way to blame. It was really a case of failure of the army at only one point in the front but all the decisions about the place and manner of confrontation had been taken by the Army Headquarters. He said that he could face the Opposition Parties but he could not face the opposition in his own party and, in spite of the confidence which the Prime Minister still reposed in him, it was clear that he no longer commanded the confidence of the party and so

he had decided to resign. When I met Lal Bahadur Shastri that night, I enquired about the position from him. I also gave my view that though I had strongly disagreed with Krishna Menon on many occasions, I felt that he was being sacrificed because of uniformed criticism which was being fanned by some interested parties or persons. I reminded Shastriji that he had been kept fully in the picture throughout the period the Prime Minister was away and he had concurred with all the decisions, and the reverses that had taken place were nothing unusual when two armies faced each other and the army which took the offensive always had the initial advantage. It was surprising that the country could be rocked in such a way just because an inadequately led brigade had met with reverses. Shastriji said that though he personally agreed with me, yet the criticism in the party was so strong and persistent that no argument, however reasonable it might be, would satisfy the critics who demanded nothing short of Krishna Menon's ouster. He said that even the Prime Minister had failed to carry any conviction with the opposition in the party and he apprehended that, unless Krishna Menon resigned or was removed, he himself and other members of the Cabinet might become the objects of public fury; and, therefore, there was no other alternative but the parting of ways. Krishna Menon told me on October 28 that he had submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister who was going to accept it and added that a Minister, who had lost the confidence of the party, as he seemed to have done, whatever might be the causes, could not continue to be a member of the Cabinet. The Prime Minister accepted the resignation on October 29 and appointed him Minister of Defence Production. The Prime Minister took over the Defence portfolio temporarily and subsequently invited Y.B. Chavan, Chief Minister, Maharashtra to come to the Centre as the Defence Minister. Krishna Menon's move to another ministry did not satisfy the opposition in the country as well as in the party and finally Krishna Menon had to leave the Cabinet on or about November 7.

The exit of a Minister does not matter much and in any case Chavan proved to be a very efficient Defence Minister and was popular with the troops and quietly and unostentatiously he

removed the stresses and strains which had earlier raised their heads in the Army. But what mattered greatly was that Krishna Menon's exit clouded the main issue and made the public and even the intelligentsia believe that the defeat was entirely due to political interference—which was not the fact at all as this narrative would show. Dalvi in his book has said that from the beginning he had been protesting against the order to use the Nyamkachu base for an offensive operation. Did anyone tell the Army Headquarters that the logistics were so difficult and were likely to go awry? Any way, no one ever raised this point at the Defence meetings and even the DMO was under the impression that the troops were evenly matched. Kaul for the first time, on return from Nyamkachu, raised this point in the Prime Minister's meeting, but he was over-ruled by his seniors, Sen and Thapar, who were much more experienced soldiers. Moreover, Kaul had not got over the shock of his defeat at Tsenjong and his emphasis on difficulties carried no conviction. Unfortunately the misconception about political interference still persists and is also fostered by interested parties and this forces the leadership to take postures which are both uncalled for and unrealistic. This over-dramatisation of a single defeat of a brigade in unfavourable terrain resulted in people losing sight of the real causes.

A curious incident occurred one day after Krishna Menon's resignation, which I am relating because it shows the amount of hostility and suspicion that had arisen in the Cabinet itself against him. The Prime Minister's Principal Secretary telephoned to me and said that in a Cabinet meeting that morning a very senior Minister had complained that he had been kept under watch by the IB at the instance of the Defence Minister. The Secretary added that the Prime Minister wanted to know the facts. I told him to tell the Prime Minister categorically that this allegation was entirely unfounded and that it was no part of the IB's work to keep track on the contacts of the various ministers. An hour later I was sent for by the Home Minister, who also mentioned the same allegation to me. I told him that he knew fully well how the IB worked and so he should have flatly contradicted this allegation as soon as it was made. I insisted that the Minister should apologise

for making this unfounded allegation and the Home Minister said that he would talk to him. Later, in the day the Principal Secretary talked to me again and said that the Prime Minister had accepted my denial and had suggested that I should meet the minister concerned and tell him that his suspicion was unfounded. I tried to contact the Minister several times that day but till late in the evening I could not get an appointment and ultimately I was told that the Minister was not willing to meet me.

The next day, after the Defence Committee meeting, I walked with the Prime Minister to his room to discuss certain other matters. The Prime Minister asked me whether I had met the Minister who had made the allegation the previous day. I told him that I had not been able to meet him, though I had tried to contact him several times on the previous day. The Prime Minister then said that he would ring up the Minister and I should then go and see him. I told the Prime Minister that this allegation had no basis whatsoever and I wanted to correct any wrong impression which might have been created in the Prime Minister's mind. The Prime Minister said that he knew that the allegation was incorrect and that the IB would not do such a thing. When I returned to my office and contacted the Minister, I got an appointment immediately. Apparently the Prime Minister had, in the meantime, asked him to see me.

When I arrived at the Minister's room I was greeted by him with words more or less to the effect, "You have let down the country by being in league with the Defence Minister." I retorted that the Minister should weigh his words carefully as I was not used to such language, and no one in the country would ever think of attributing wrong intention to me. I also told him that I had not come to discuss with him any matter other than the allegation that he had made the previous day and I wanted to know the grounds on which he had made such a serious allegation. He immediately replied that he had been wrongly informed and it was not the IB but the DMI that had been watching him under the Defence Minister's orders and he said that he had learnt it from a high-ranking military officer. I discounted his story and told him that the Military Intelligence

would not also do such a thing. However, so far as I was concerned, as he had withdrawn his allegation, the matter ended; and I enquired from him whether he would write to the Prime Minister acknowledging his mistake. He said that he would.

The Minister then asked me whether I was not very close to the Defence Minister. I said I was in the sense that the DIB had to be close to any Minister who was in charge of the Defence, Home or Foreign portfolios. Moreover, I would be loyal to each Minister, including himself, so long as he retained the confidence of the Prime Minister. It did not matter who occupied a particular post. The Minister then enquired if he could ask me to watch the associations of the Defence Minister. I said that he could not give me such an order and in any case it was not one of the IB's duties to watch any Minister's associations. He then asked me whether I would take the orders from the Home Minister to do this work. I flatly said, "no". I further said that the Home Minister had never in the past asked me to do this type of work nor was he likely to do it in the future. Then he asked me who could give me such an order—could the Prime Minister do it? I replied that this was a hypothetical question. The Prime Minister would never think of it nor would he ever force a decision on me. He then asked me what would I do if I had information that a Minister was plotting against the Prime Minister's life. I said that in that case I did not require any orders and I would go all out to frustrate that attempt. But that would be on my own judgment.

The Minister then changed the subject and asked me why the IB had under-estimated the Chinese threat which had led to the disaster in Nyamkachu. I asked him who had informed him that the IB had under-estimated the threat. He said that his informant was a high military officer. I replied that I could easily conclude who he was but no military officer, however highly he might be placed, would ever know what the IB had reported unless he was at the receiving end, and that the only persons who received IB reports were the Director of Military Intelligence, the CGS or the COAS and I was sure that none of them could have made the allegation as we worked so closely together. So the officer who had given him this

information had obviously told an untruth. I told him that such loose talks only resulted in loss of faith and confidence and would ultimately lead to the weakening of the country and the Minister should not pay any heed to such gossip-mongers.

The Minister and I parted as friends. Subsequently he was of great assistance to me in the various spheres of work into which we expanded soon afterwards and he always retained complete faith in me.

In the evening, when I met the Prime Minister, he asked me whether I had met the particular Minister. I replied in the affirmative and narrated to him all that had happened. The Prime Minister said that a letter of apology had come and he showed it to me. He enquired whether I was satisfied and I said that I was and I left it to the Prime Minister to decide whether he would like to mention it in the next Cabinet meeting to correct the erroneous impression that might have been created in the minds of the other Ministers also. When I subsequently met the Home Minister and told him all this, his comment was, "We have some strange people in the Cabinet."

In any country when an army suffers a defeat, it blames everybody but itself, and it happened in India also. The army blamed the Government, the civilians and everybody that had a hand even remotely in framing defence policy. A cry went up from these quarters blaming the politicians for pressurising the Government into a position of confrontation with the Chinese, blaming the Government for starving the army of some essential equipment and then forcing it to fight the enemy in unsuitable terrain, blaming the civilians for unnecessarily interfering in military affairs and alleging that the army had been sent improperly equipped and in insufficient numbers without proper communications to fight an enemy vastly superior, both in numbers and in armament. As regards the difficulty of terrain, shortage of equipment, inadequacy of numbers and the difficulty of communications, all these complaints were true up to a point. But it is forgotten that in October, 1962, the Chinese engaged the Indian army simultaneously at four places, (1) Nyamkachu river front, (2) Bumla-Tawang Sector, (3) Kibithoo-Walong Sector, and (4) Daulat Beg Oldi,—

the first three in NEFA and the fourth in Ladakh. Of these, only Tawang was located at a less forbidding height (about 10,000 feet) with a second-class road connecting it with Bomdila. All the other three places were equally difficult of access, Daulat Beg Oldi being the most difficult and even Walong being much further from the road-head than Dhola. If Nyamkachu river-bed had an elevation of about 12,000 ft., so had Kibithoo, and Daulat Beg Oldi was over 18,000 ft. The same shortages in equipment were everywhere and the same army fought at all these places. Yet, though our army was no doubt pushed back at all these places, except at Nyamkachu, it fought well—very well indeed—at the other three places and withdrew only after inflicting maximum casualties on the enemy and in good formation to predetermined positions in the rear to fight another day. Only on the Nyamkachu front the brigade disintegrated and practically disappeared. Even on the Nyamkachu front on October 10, a weak Indian company with the same equipment without any artillery or mortar support had fought valiantly for nearly six hours against the enemy who was almost a battalion strong and had inflicted maximum casualties before withdrawing. Therefore, the cause of this debacle on the Nyamkachu front has to be sought somewhere else. It would be naive to suggest or believe that shortages of equipment or the difficult terrain were the real causes of the debacle.

The plain fact was that both the Brigade and the Division Commander disliked the Nyamkachu front. In fact, as soon as the decision had been taken by the Army Headquarters that the Chinese were to be evicted by force from the north bank of the river, the Division Commander, Naranjan Prasad, had reported to the Corps Commander that the task of ousting the Chinese, who were then only 200 in number, from the north bank was impossible. (Almost exactly three years later Naranjan Prasad said the same thing when he was commanding a Division on the Lahore front, and so the plans went awry till he was replaced.) The Brigade Commander was apparently of the same opinion. The Corps Commander, Umrao Singh, did not think so, but he wanted more time to assemble his troops and to make proper preparations. He wanted the offensive in March but forgot that the passes, once

they closed towards the end of November, would not reopen till May and by that time the situation would stabilise and the Chinese would more or less be left in control of the territory into which they had trespassed. When the Army Commander supported by the Chief of Army Staff decided to collect a Brigade on this front before September 29, the local officers, as Khera has pointed out, took little interest and it took the Army Commander and the COAS nearly a fortnight to discover that the move actually had not taken place. And yet as soon as Kaul took over he could move the three battalions forward within four or five days proving that the delay was not purely due to the terrain. These officers were obsessed with the wrong notion that the decision to fight at Nyamkachu was a political decision which had been forced upon the Army Headquarters which was too weak to resist it. Unlike his Division and Brigade Commanders, Umrao Singh had a plan, probably a good plan, but it would have delayed the offensive. As it was, the offensive never came. I remember the Army Commander telling us on October 1 that Umrao had a plan which he had not disclosed. That being so and as it was obvious that this plan was different to that of the Army Commander, it would have been better to call the Corps Commander to the Army Headquarters and, with the help of the DMO and the CGS, work out a plan acceptable to everybody, which later should have been implemented in the field with vigour and determination without any mental reservations at any level. The Corps Commander's removal was not received well by the Division and Brigade Commanders, who felt that they also had been slighted. Kaul in his effort to make up for lost time went too fast and his logistics failed him, and he met with sullen opposition from the Division and the Brigade Commanders who had infected the Battalion Commanders also. Then came the Tsenjong operation without adequate preparations and the men were left to the mercy of the Chinese without any support. This was the one single factor which demoralised the troops on this front and made them lose their confidence in their commanders. (This was apparent also from the letters that were coming from the men at the front and which were seen by military censorship.) But instead of trying to

retrieve the position by making a stronger resolve to fight the Chinese with better preparations as could have been done with the men and resources available, the Division and Brigade Commanders argued with Kaul and all but convinced him that no offensive could be undertaken and that even for defence the terrain was unsuitable. The Nyamkachu river flowing at 12,000 feet had on the north the Thagla Ridge with Thagla Pass at 14,000 feet and on the south the Tsangdhar Ridge with the Hatung La Pass also at the same height. The distance to the passes both to the north and the south from the river was the same. If the terrain was difficult for an Indian offensive to oust the Chinese from the north bank, it was equally difficult for the Chinese to oust the Indians from the south bank; and if the terrain was difficult for the defence of the south bank, it was equally difficult for the Chinese to defend the north bank. When Kaul left the front after the Tsenjong reverse, he naturally left behind the impression on the Division and the Brigade Commanders and all the Battalion Commanders and naturally on all the lower ranks that he was going to argue for the withdrawal of the troops from the Nyamkachu front and so they all went into a period of inaction, though on the other bank they saw hectic Chinese preparations from that day onwards. Kaul was partially successful in his arguments at Delhi and it was decided that no offensive would be undertaken at that time. When the Army Commander gave the opinion that the Nyamkachu position could and should be defended, he was right. The only snag was that Sen was thinking of a brigade which he had commanded, a brigade full of the offensive spirit and, even though inadequately equipped, under a Commander who was determined to gain his objective and had the ability to do it. So when he said a Brigade was a Brigade and could take on a Division, he had not considered a Brigade in a low state of morale where its Commander and Battalion Commanders had convinced themselves that they could not fight or a Brigade in which the leadership had forfeited the confidence of the men by their handling of the Tsenjong operation. When Kaul went back to Tezpur and communicated the new orders to the Division Commander there was again a protest and the period of

"no preparation" continued. If Kaul could have gone to the front once again, he might have been able to galvanise into action the men who had practically lost all their zeal to fight and were only waiting to be withdrawn; but his illness and his evacuation to Delhi caused further depression and the stalemate continued. In fact, as mentioned by Dalvi in his book, even on the 19th when the Chinese were poised for an attack he was asking for permission to withdraw. When the conditions were such that the leadership did not want to fight, when the Battalion Commanders were infected with the same spirit of inaction, and when the men had lost their confidence, and in the face of the continuous Chinese propaganda of "*Bhai-Bhai*" and "go back from our country", it was not at all surprising that such a debacle should take place. Of individual gallantries there were many and the Rajputs, the first unit which received the shock of the Chinese attack, fought well enough according to the best traditions of the Indian Army, but the rest of the Brigade was easily folded up and disintegrated.

This divided counsel and want of determination to fight the Chinese did not exist on the other three fronts—Tawang, Walong and Daulat Beg Oldi. In Tawang, the units were ready to fight and they fought hard, caused maximum casualties on the Chinese and it was not till Naranjan Prasad, passing through Tawang on his way from Nyamkachu, ordered Tawang to be evacuated and new positions to be held at Jhang that the units withdrew, and even then most reluctantly; and the withdrawal of both the Sikh Light Infantry and the Garhwalis was in perfect order and they formed the nucleus of the army which was collected at Sela to fight later. Here the Commanders had no mental reservations. They had been given a job and they were determined to do it. They did not argue about their difficulties or shortages. Sen's original decision to hold Tawang was right and with some more reinforcement our troops could probably have held Tawang and upheld India's prestige. At this place it might have been possible to bring in air support also. Walong Sector was also under the same Division Commander, but the Brigade was too far away to be contaminated by the pessimism prevailing on the Nyamkachu front. There was a determined Brigade Commander who held positions on the

McMahon Line itself and here again the units fought hard inflicting maximum casualties and only when overwhelmed by superior numbers retired in good formation to prepared defences a few miles to the rear. Neither at Tawang nor at Kibithoo did our troops give the Chinese any chance for a chase which the Chinese had done relentlessly behind the troops retreating from the Nyamkachu front. In both these places the enemy had been mauled severely and the Chinese had to lick their wounds and regroup before launching the next offensive, and this did not come till nearly three weeks later. In Daulat Beg Oldi, also, there was a determined Commander, who did not give in and even though our troops were in an extremely difficult position so far as the terrain, height and communications were concerned, they fought well and retreated, when ordered, in good formation to positions in the rear.

Kaul and Dalvi have both strongly criticised the Government for forcing the army to fight in an unsuitable terrain and have alleged that this was a political and not a military decision. They may be excused for saying so as they were arguing their own defence. It is possible that Dalvi might have had a genuine misconception. But Kaul knew that neither the first decision to fight on this front nor the decision taken on October 11 nor even the decision taken on October 17 was a political decision. Each of them had been a military decision. The discerning reader can easily make out where the "Himalyan blunder" was. It was certainly not in deciding to defend Nyamkachu. It is here that the Chinese had trespassed and occupied Indian territory. If they had to be fought and ousted, they had to be fought here and not a hundred miles further south leaving the territory open for further Chinese occupation; and in deciding to hold this territory the Government had acted on the advice of the highest military authority in the land. Difference of views there could easily have been but once the decision was taken by the Army Commander to fight here, and he must have weighed all the difficulties before coming to the decision, it was necessary for all concerned to implement that decision with full vigour and without any mental reservations. This unfortunately did not happen on the Nyamkachu

front—and the result that followed was inevitable.

I shall have occasion to refer later to the weaknesses that existed in the decision-making machinery both in the political and the military fields, as these have been argued *ad nauseum* causing confusion all round. In the process, the specific causes, which led to specific adverse but avoidable results, have been forgotten. But for making a proper analysis it is necessary to juxtapose the causes and effects properly. Then only proper lessons can be drawn which can be of use for the future.

But, apart from the purely military and the internal political point of view, the Chinese attack had a much bigger impact *vis-a-vis* India's international thinking at least so far as China was concerned. War as an instrument of policy was morally and mentally repugnant to Pandit Nehru. He had said so many times. He had steadfastly pursued a peace policy not only with India's neighbours but throughout the whole world. He had condemned aggression everywhere. Actually, nonalignment and co-existence were really the offshoots of this peace policy. He had done his best to befriend China, because in his mind—and this was a fact —China had also, after a century of oppression by the foreigners, come into its own just as India had done; and so a bond of friendship was natural between these two down-trodden people. But all his efforts had gone in vain and India was now face to face with China unmasked, ready to tear the pledges of friendship and enforce her fantastic claims and achieve her imperialistic aims by force of arms.

This obviously came as a severe shock to Pandit Nehru, as was evident from the remarkable statement he made in the Lok Sabha on October 25, when he said: "We were getting out of touch with reality in the modern world and we were living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation." What he meant was that the modern world was cruel and selfish and though India had hoped that it could be made friendly and helpful and had striven hard to make it so, she had failed—and the forces of evil had prevailed.

Pandit Nehru gave vent to his agony in a letter which he circulated to the heads of friendly nations on October 26. It is worth quoting the letter *in extenso* here:

"I am taking the liberty of addressing you in regard to a very serious situation that has arisen on our frontiers because of the armed aggression of Chinese forces on our territory. The consequences of this large-scale aggression are not only serious for India but also for the rest of the world.

"Conditioned as we are by our historical background and traditions of tolerance, understanding and peace, we have, ever since India became independent, consistently followed a policy of peace and friendly relations with all countries. Abhorrence of war and violence is part of our national tradition.

"We understand the horrors of war, and all our efforts have been directed to the prevention of war and the preservation of peace. We have endeavoured to follow the same policy of peace in our differences with our neighbours. That is why when the Chinese aggression first started in Ladakh five years ago, we showed patience and restraint. Even though 12,000 square miles of Indian territory was occupied by the Chinese forces, we did not force a crisis but continued to explore avenues of a peaceful and honourable settlement. In 1960, the Chinese Prime Minister expressed a desire to meet me, and I met him readily in order to find some way of resolving the differences between us peacefully. The differences were not resolved, and we agreed that officials of both the Governments should examine all the facts. The report produced by our officials fully supported our position in regard to the traditional and customary boundary between India and Tibet, which had been repeatedly confirmed by agreements and treaties. It was my hope that these facts would be considered by the Chinese Government and a further effort would be made to resolve the differences peacefully. However, the Chinese aggression continued and was even intensified. We were obliged, therefore, to take limited defensive measures to halt this aggressive advance. While taking these measures, however, we continued to make peaceful approaches with a view to easing tensions so that a proper climate might be created for further talks to resolve the differences.

"While these approaches were being made, and we were hoping that they would lead to results, the Chinese forces suddenly, on September 8, 1962, made a fresh incursion into our territory.

They crossed the international boundary in the Eastern Sector which they had respected for twelve years since they came into Tibet. Our frontier in that sector traditionally and by treaty is the high ridge of the Himalaya mountains which forms the watershed. We could have taken immediate action to resist this further aggression. However, being wedded to the ways of peace, we continued our effort to persuade the Chinese to end this aggression by withdrawing from our territory, more particularly in the Eastern sector, which had been invaded for the first time for ages past on September 8. We pointed out the correct facts to them about the location of the border which was the high ridge of the Himalaya mountains. We also took some steps for the defence of the border.

"While an exchange of notes on this subject was going on, the Chinese, after a number of probing attacks, made a massive attack on our Defence forces on the morning of October 20 all along the India-China border in the Eastern Sector as well as the Western Sector. An attack on this scale could only have been made after careful preparation. Our Defence forces have put up a stiff resistance, but they have been pushed back by greatly superior numbers and massive weapons. In spite of these set-backs, our resistance will continue, for we are determined to defend our country and to put an end to aggression.

"It is a matter of deep regret that the Chinese in their relations with India have paid back evil for good. Friendly and peaceful relations with China have been our basic policy ever since India became independent. We have consistently followed this policy and gone out of our way to support China's case in the council of the world. We regret that in their relations with India, China has not merely shown a hostile attitude, but has also resorted to dissimulation. Even the pre-meditated and massive attack on our Defence forces on October 20 has been represented by China as an attack by Indian forces on China's border guards. That this assertion is completely false is clear from the weight and intensity of the Chinese attack which is not confined to the Eastern Sector but includes other sectors of the India-China border. No self-respecting country, and certainly not India

with her love of freedom, can submit to such aggression, whatever may be the consequences. Nor can India allow China's occupation of Indian territory to be used as a bargaining counter for dictating to India a settlement of the differences regarding the boundary on China's terms.

"This is not a mere boundary dispute or a question of small territorial frontier adjustments. Apart from the vast and fantastic claims that China has made, China had already occupied 12,000 sq. miles of Indian territory during the last five years. While notes were being exchanged for arranging talks and discussions to ease tensions and even dates and places were being suggested, further aggression by China started on September 8 and further areas of Indian territory were occupied in a new sector. The issue involved is not one of small territorial gains, one way or the other, but of standards of international behaviour between neighbouring countries and whether the world will allow the principles of 'Might is Right' to prevail in international relations. Bearing this in mind, India will continue to resist aggression, both to preserve her honour and integrity and to prevent international standards from deteriorating into the jungle law of 'Might is Right'. When aggression is continuously taking place and vast Chinese armies are moving further into our territory, how can we discuss or talk about a peaceful settlement? The first essential is that the Chinese forces along the India-China border should go back at least to where they were prior to the September 8, 1962.

"I have ventured to give you this short account of the crisis that has arisen on the Indian frontier with China. The story of aggression is a long one going back several years. The most recent aggression is in our Eastern Sector which began on September 8 and has, since the Chinese massive attack along the entire India-China frontier which started on October 20, resulted in serious conflicts, and has brought matters to a crisis. This crisis is not only of India but of the world and will have far-reaching consequences on the standards of international behaviour and on the peace of the world. We cannot submit to this law of the jungle which affects our integrity and the honour of our motherland.

"In this hour of crisis, when we are engaged in resisting this

aggression, we are confident that we shall have your sympathy and support as well as the sympathy and support of all countries, not only because of their friendly relations with us, but also because our struggle is in the interests of world peace and is directed to the elimination of deceit, dissimulation and force in international relations."

He also gave vent to the same feeling in his letter to the Chinese Prime Minister on October 27, in which he said, "Nothing in my long political career has hurt and grieved me more than the fact that the hopes and aspirations of peaceful and friendly neighbourly relations, which we entertained and to promote which my colleagues in the Government of India and myself worked so hard ever since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, should have been shattered by the hasty and unfriendly twist given to India-China relations during the last few years. Current clashes on the India-China border arising out of what is, in fact, a Chinese invasion of India, which you have described as most distressing, are the final culmination of the deterioration in relations between India and China."

Our defeat on the Nyamkachu front was really not of much consequence in the military sense and such defeats have been suffered by other countries also at the hands of aggressors. England, France and Russia suffered severe reverses in the beginning at the hands of the Germans and later the Japanese overran the whole of South-East Asia driving the British, the French, the Dutch and the Americans before them. The Americans also had their Pearl Harbour. So it was not so much the defeat of a Brigade at Nyamkachu that had distressed the Prime Minister; he was too experienced a statesman to be swayed by an event of this type; this could not have broken his equanimity. What distressed him was that a policy of peace, to which he had held steadfastly throughout his political career, and which he had been pursuing since India's independence for the good not only of India and her neighbours but of the world, and the friendship which he had been trying to cultivate with China with whom India had much in common and who was a close neighbour, had been shattered by this treachery

of the Chinese. Henceforward India could not follow the same path in her foreign relations and maintain her abhorrence to war whether in India or elsewhere in the world. She had to face the evil, which, it had been proved to his dismay, could not be conquered by good faith and sweet reason alone, but had to be met with force and the consequences had to be borne. Pandit Nehru's dream was of a world where there would be no conflicts. Nyamkachu jerked him to a state of wakefulness when he found that conflicts in this world could not be avoided and had to be faced. It is not that he had not thought about it. In his briefing to us in early 1962, he had told us that if war ever came India would have to modify her entire thinking and gear all her economy and, if necessary, severely curtail all her plans to prosecute the war. He did not like this prospect. Indeed, the very idea was repugnant to him. But events had overtaken him and he was left with no alternative.

The letter issued by him to the Heads of the States in Europe, America, Asia and Africa brought sympathies from many countries in Asia and Africa. But the USA, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand not only sympathised but gave material assistance in the form of much-needed equipment of which India was short at that time. Plane-loads of American and British arms arrived at Palam and Dum Dum and they were carried to Leh and Tezpur by American transport planes. Though Russia did not assist India by sending war-materials, she indirectly helped India by cutting off additional oil supplies to China and also expressed strong disapproval of this conflict on the frontier. China, therefore, realised that in any future conflict, which posed a serious threat to her integrity, India would not be left alone. But China had to register a claim on NEFA and she was determined to do it and hoped to achieve her aim by a short, quick war which would not bring any American reprisal against her.

23 Black November

IMMEDIATELY AFTER OCCUPYING Tawang, the Chinese brought forward their troops with great rapidity and put in concentrated efforts to improve the road from Shao to Bumla and to convert the bridle path from Bumla to Tawang into a motorable road so as to make the entire stretch of road from Tsona to Tawang fit for the use of heavy trucks. They built this road with tremendous speed and completed it within two weeks, a really marvellous engineering feat, exhibiting a much superior road-building technique in this high plateau than that of our engineers. Day after day our forward posts watched the progress of this road and we reported this to the Government. The Air Force also watched the progress anxiously and through our joint efforts we got a full picture of this road as its construction progressed. By watching its progress, we could say definitely that it would be completed by the twelfth of November. It was obvious, therefore, that the Chinese were building this road to bring up reinforcements to Tawang and were determined to make a further thrust into NEFA.

After the withdrawal of the Indian army from the Tawang Subdivision, the question that next arose was where in Kameng the army should make a stand to prevent further Chinese encroachment. The four battalions in the Dhola sector had been irretrievably lost, but the two battalions, i.e. the Sikh Light Infantry and the Garhwal Rifles, which had been deployed for the defence of Tawang, had been withdrawn in good formation and had now taken up positions on the southern side of the Tawang-chu river after blowing up the bridge connecting Tawang with Sela Pass. Should we make our stand here to block any further Chinese advance or, if this position was unsuitable, withdraw further to a more suitable ground? There was serious thinking in the Army Headquarters about the next defence position.

From October 24, the Prime Minister himself used to preside over the defence meetings. The civilian opinion represented by the Foreign and the Defence Secretaries and myself was that we should defend Bomdila. Our opinion really was based not so much on tactical as on political considerations. We considered the defence of Bomdila essential because its fall would place the entire Buddhist Mompas under Chinese control and they might then succumb to Chinese influence. Moreover, this was the region where the Chinese had made the largest claim of territory. By October 25, the Army Headquarters was ready with its plans, and at the Prime Minister's meeting, the COAS said that the Army had selected the Sela range running south-west to north-east parallel to Tawangchu river for making its next stand in Kameng. This really is a long ridge, fourteen to eighteen thousand feet high, following the south-east bank of Tawangchu river starting from south-west of Bangazong to the north-east almost touching the Tibet frontier where it meets the main Himalayan watershed. The officer who knew this area thoroughly was Brig. Palit, the then DMO, as he had served in that area and had trekked all over Kameng. On a large-scale map he explained all the salient features of this great dividing line and stressed that there were five passes through which the enemy could come into the south-eastern side of this range. The southernmost pass was at Bangazong. Then there was a group of three central passes, Sela, Tse La and Kiya La and the northernmost was Poshing La. The Bomdila-Tawang road crossed this range at Sela and the Sikh Light Infantry was then guarding this pass and the Garhwal Rifles the slope between Sela and Jhang going down to the river. The DMO explained that whilst the three central passes would converge on the Bomdila-Tawang road, the southern pass via Bangazong would give the enemy an access direct to the foothills and also to Sengezong almost half-way between Dirang and Sela. Hence it was necessary to guard Bangazong adequately to prevent the Chinese infiltrating to our rear and cutting the road communication. He further said that another important pass was Poshing La from which a route came straight to Bomdila. If the Chinese forced this pass, they would by-pass the entire Sela posi-

tion and pose a direct threat to Bomdila, and thereby disrupt the rear of the Indian army which they would keep engaged by trying to force their way through the main Sela Pass—about 70 miles west of Bomdila. Such a threat would endanger the Indian army's positions ahead of Bomdila and so it was necessary to guard Poshing La strongly. The approximate distances between the main positions were as follows: (1) Tezpur to the foothills at Rupa—50 miles, (2) Rupa to Tenga valley—15 miles, (3) Tenga valley to Bomdila—18 miles, (4) Bomdila to Dirang—30 miles, (5) Dirang to Sengezong—25 miles, (6) Sengezong to Sela—18 miles, and (7) Sela to Tawangchu—28 miles. The distance from Bangazong to Sengezong was about 20 miles and from Poshing La to Bomdila 40 miles. From Bangazong the approach to the foothills was easy.

In view of this firm advice, the Prime Minister decided that the Sela range should be defended. We civilians were happy that not only Bomdila would continue to be in our hands but practically the whole of Kameng Division south-east of Tawang would be saved. Kaul has mentioned in his book that there was difference of opinion in the Army Headquarters about the suitability of this mountain range for defensive purposes and there were officers who considered that the defence should be concentrated on Bomdila. I do not know whether there was any difference of opinion in the Army Headquarters, but at that time, as far as I know, everybody was unanimous on this choice and even Kaul had never expressed any misgivings about it. In fact, the Sela range was considered to be almost impregnable.*

The other sector which it was decided would be held strongly was Walong, where also the Chinese had staked a claim and had already shown their intentions by forcing us to give up the defence positions on the McMahon Line and occupying our territory between the ridge and Kibithoo. They had now to come downhill from Kibithoo to Walong (about 11 miles).

*As Gen. Thapar and Maj.-Gen. Palit have subsequently explained, withdrawal of the Army so far as Bomdila would have exposed the entire foothills to Chinese infiltration and even the plains area north of the Brahmaputra would have been threatened.

Their road from Drowa Gompha to Rima was motorable and they were improving the road from Rima to the frontier. They had also been noticed bringing more troops to our frontier and it was apparent that they wanted to make a thrust at least up to Walong. The third area where movements were noticed was near Lola Pass which would lead to Manigong and Mechuka. The fourth area was near Korbo and Gelling and the aim was obviously Tuting. Further thrust was expected from Tamadem side into Taksing and Limeking. The Army Headquarters decided to defend the whole stretch of this frontier and started concentrating troops at all these places.

The plan of the Army Headquarters was to rebuild the 4 Infantry Division with its Headquarters at Dirang with a Brigade with 5 battalions on the Sela group of passes, a Brigade at the Div. Headquarters at Dirang to guard the route between Bomdila and Sela and a Brigade at Bomdila itself. Tremendous effort was made to achieve this build-up and to a large extent this was achieved excepting that the Brigades at Dirang and Bomdila remained short by one battalion each. Two battalions were proceeding to reach their destination on November 18 but were a day too late. On the Walong front it was decided to build up a Brigade with four battalions. Unlike the Bomdila-Sela sector, where the newly built road led straight up to Sela, in the Walong sector there was only a small air strip and the roadhead was Hayuliang—40 miles to the south-west. But the air force did marvels and flew sorties after sorties and nearly completed the build-up before the second Chinese attack came. Mechuka was defended by two battalions and this was considered to be enough. There was a battalion each at Limeking and Tuting. Naranjan Prasad had been replaced by A.S. Pathania as the Commander of the 4 Division whose charge was only the Kameng front. The rest of NEFA was under a new Division under M.S. Pathania with Headquarters at Teju. These particular dispositions had never been mentioned at the Defence meetings, nor was it necessary to do so. So far as we were concerned, it was enough for us to know that these positions were going to be defended and the army was not going to leave any loopholes.

Kaul resumed duty as the Corps Commander on October 27. Harbaksh Singh's stay was too brief, but his presence during that short period had served as a morale-booster. Somehow or the other Kaul's resumption of the command was not liked by the troops and from the letters written by OR's, JCO's, and junior officers, it was clear that they all felt unhappy that Kaul had come back. There was no cause whatsoever for such animosity as Kaul had done a lot for the 4 Division when he was its Commander and should have been highly regarded. But the troops had apparently not forgotten the incident at Tsenjong on October 10. Whether there was any other cause we did not know; but the fact remains that the morale of the men definitely went down when Kaul resumed the command. I felt then that a grievous mistake was being made by sending Kaul back to this Corps to rehabilitate him just because some enemies had most unjustly levelled criticisms against him for running away from NEFA. Kaul should have been rehabilitated in some other way. He had no doubt recovered and was fit to resume as the CGS but he was not yet physically fit to command troops in the field. Harbaksh Singh should have been left in command.

Moreover, Kaul had suffered a severe shock and was in mental distress due to the reverses his troops had suffered at Nyamkachu and had not recovered his morale by any means. He had led himself to believe that the Indians were no match for the Chinese and so India must not only ask for massive military assistance but seek military alliance with countries like USA and UK. Whilst sick in bed in Delhi, he had prepared a plan, which has been referred to in detail by Khera in his book *India's Defence Problem*. Kaul had earlier shown this plan to me and I had found it impractical at that time. According to him, a dictatorship had to be ushered in the country and, in alliance with countries like America, Taiwan, South Korea, etc., a planned joint attack had to be made against China from all directions. Large-scale military supplies were to be obtained from outside, particularly the USA, and foreign troops were to be invited to India to fight in NEFA. The American Air Force was to provide not only an air-umbrella for the vulnerable parts of North India but also launch massive attacks on China

from bases in India. If India had accepted this plan, her position would have been no better than that of South Vietnam in 1966-67. Kaul had given a copy of this plan to the American Ambassador who had called on him during his illness.

Probably Kaul's lack of confidence also infected A.S. Pathania, the new Commander of the 4 Division. The Army Headquarters started feeling that though he was a soldier of reputation, who had gained the "Maha Vir Chakra", he did not quite comprehend the tasks before him as a Division Commander and was fumbling all the way. But already one change had been effected and it was too early to effect another.

From the intelligence point of view, due to our withdrawal from all over the Kameng front, we had lost many of our frontier posts. We had also lost many posts in Lohit and other divisions. Actually, though operational intelligence was not the responsibility of the IB, Thapar and Kaul wanted that IB officers should be posted at the headquarters of each battalion and higher formations to assist the army by collecting and evaluating intelligence about the enemy. So we made a complete reorganisation of our Intelligence posts in NEFA and, apart from the static posts which we were still holding on the frontier in other sectors, we put Intelligence Officers at each battalion headquarters to feed the battalion direct. Thus on the Sela front there were five Intelligence Officers, one with each battalion, with a senior officer at the brigade level. We posted officers at Dirang and Bomdila also. The same arrangement was made at Walong. At Mechuka and Tuting and at Monigong, Gelling, Korbo, Limeking and Taksing our posts had held out and they started direct liaison with the army units posted there. However, in doing so we lost our control over the work of these Intelligence Officers and, as they could not communicate with us direct, we missed some of the information which they collected because all this went to the military pool. But there was no other way of feeding the local units quickly with the intelligence collected. Our supervising officers from Tezpur were asked to visit the front frequently, contact these field officers and the Battalion Commanders and see that they were working properly. We have reason to believe that they acquitted

themselves well and stayed at their posts till the end.

During one such visit, Lamba, the Assistant Director at Tezpur, along with Johri, Additional Political Officer, Bomdila, found that there was much enemy activity near Bangazong. Actually, the Pass at this place was very steep which normally would not be used by invading troops and yet it was plain that the Chinese were reconnoitring that Pass in strength and this must have been with a definite purpose. Both of them came to the Div. Headquarters at Dirang and gave this information to Pathania and suggested that he might guard this so far unguarded Pass. The DMO had told us about the importance of this Pass, which the enemy could use not only to cut our army's rear by deploying troops up to the foothills but also to cut the road between Sela to Dirang near about Sengezong. But Pathania was indignant and said that he was not going to learn tactics from civilians and literally drove these officers out from his Headquarters. A couple of days later when the Intelligence Officer covering Poshing La sent a messenger to the Div. Headquarters reporting the appearance of Chinese troops at that Pass, the constable (in plain cloth) was arrested and kept in prison at the Div. Headquarters and his message remained undelivered till 24 hours later when the local Revenue Officer recognised him and secured his realease. No one paid any attention to his message. (These incidents were recounted by Johri before the Prime Minister at Tezpur on December 5.) But this was not typical of the reception intelligence received at other places. At Mechuka, the Battalion Commander, relying on the intelligence, built good defence positions on the hills surrounding that place. At Tuting also the intelligence received was utilised.

As soon as they had completed the construction of the Bumla-Tawang Road, we noticed that the Chinese, besides building up their forces on the Tawangchu river front facing the three central passes, including Sela, were moving along the north bank of Tawangchu towards Poshing La. This move was noticed by the Indian Air Force observation planes also and we mentioned this danger of the Chinese taking Poshing La and coming straight to Bomdila by-passing Sela Pass at several meetings with the Prime Minister

who was also the Defence Minister. The Army Headquarters must have passed on this information to the Corps. We were, however, certain that Poshing La was being adequately defended, because the DMO had, at the very first meeting, mentioned the importance of this Pass. We also heard that the Chinese were telling the people at Tawang that the Indian army had occupied the passes but they would occupy the hilltops overlooking the Indians and bombard them with mortars to make the Indian positions untenable whilst Indian fire would not reach them.

One day in the Defence meeting, the COAS said that he had no alternative but to withdraw all the troops from Nagaland and enquired whether I would take charge of that area. The Defence Minister was keen that I should relieve the army. I was willing but I was not sure whether I could get as many as 15 to 18 police battalions in so short a time to fill the gap. I said I would consider this but found that my senior officers were opposed to this proposal as we did not have the resources at our command. I consulted the Home Minister in the evening but he also strongly opposed our taking on any additional commitments when we were already overstretched. So next morning I informed the Defence Minister of my inability to take on this responsibility which made him unhappy. The Nagas, however, luckily for us, did not create any trouble so long as our army was engaged with the Chinese.

About the second week of November, 1962, we were asked both by the Prime Minister (Defence Minister) and the Home Minister to make a fresh assessment of the Chinese dispositions and also to make an estimate about the fresh troops that might have been brought into Tibet from their bases in China. By this time the reports of our Consul-General, Lhasa, from June to September, which had been held up in transmission by the Chinese authorities in Tibet, had been received. From other sources also we received reports of large-scale Chinese troop movements from Sinkiang to Western Tibet and from Shenshi area into Central and Eastern Tibet. The Chinese reserve Divisions at Lhasa, Nagchuka, etc. had moved forward to the Indian frontier and their positions had been taken by these new units coming from the bordering areas of China. There was also information of at least two crack Divisions of the

Chinese 21st Army being moved into Tibet. We estimated that whereas the overall Chinese strength in Tibet on September 1 was of the order of about eleven to twelve Divisions, by November 1 this strength had increased to a minimum of fourteen Divisions and more troops were on the move, particularly on the Ladakh and NEFA borders. Of course, of these fourteen Divisions, three were in Lhasa, Chamdo and Nagchuka and three Divisions were on the Nepal-Tibet border. So the number of Divisions immediately on our own frontier was eight of which four were against NEFA, two against Ladakh, one against Sikkim and one distributed over the rest of the frontier.

Against this strength of the enemy the COAS estimated that his troops numbered a Division in Ladakh, a Brigade in Punjab-Himachal Pradesh, two Divisions in Darjeeling-Sikkim sector and two in NEFA. He felt that two more Divisions would be needed to hold the Chinese if they attacked again, one more in NEFA and a brigade each in Punjab-Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh, thereby bringing our strength to about seven Divisions to face the Chinese. It must be admitted here that whereas the Chinese could easily move troops from the Nepal frontier and also from Lhasa, Nagchuka and Chamdo to our frontier and fill the gaps by drawing upon their inexhaustible supply of man-power, for India it was difficult at this time to find even these seven Divisions without denuding the Pakistan frontier which would expose Punjab and Kashmir fronts to great dangers.

In the second week of November, the Prime Minister asked me to pay a visit to Tezpur. He was a bit concerned on receiving persistent reports about the demoralisation of the troops and also of the Commanders in this sector and he wanted me to make an assessment of the situation and report to him the actual position. This really was a military matter and so I conferred with Thapar, who himself was going to Tezpur on an inspection visit. He also suggested that I might go and find out the situation and in that way he would be able to get an independent opinion. So I arrived at Tezpur on November 9 by an IAF plane. That afternoon and till late at night I sat with our Intelligence staff at Tezpur. Bisht, the Deputy Director from Shillong, had also arrived and from the

headquarters, Col. Charanji Lal, who used to deal with Chinese military intelligence, had accompanied me. We looked into all the information about the Chinese build-up on the various fronts and the tactics which they were likely to follow. Our estimate was that the Chinese by then had two Divisions in Tawang and probably two Brigades opposite Kibithoo, two Battalions opposite Lola and two near Gelling and a Brigade at Tamadem. They had also moved forward practically to all the main passes which they were occupying. It was also clear that the Chinese were preparing to cross Bangazong and Poshing La passes at the southern and the northernmost extremities of Sela range. I spent a lot of time with the Inspector General of Police, Assam, making plans for the protection of the railways on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river because, in case of a Chinese breakthrough of our lines, the threat to railway communications might also develop. We also discussed other internal security matters and prepared the necessary plans. Col. Charanji Lal made an assessment of the army morale. At this time many stragglers from the Nyamkachu front had come to Tezpur and other places in North Assam and the place was reeking with all kinds of exaggerated and alarming rumours. These unattached troops were recklessly spinning yarns about the overwhelming might of the Chinese and their vastly superior arms against which the Indians had no chance. No doubt these stories were being told to justify their own retreat, but this was having a demoralising effect on the new troops who were being inducted to the front.

Next morning, that is on the 10th, I met Kaul at the Corps Headquarters and I had a long discussion with him. He showed me all his positions on the map, but I found that he had no troops guarding Poshing La excepting a Platoon of the Assam Rifles. I asked him whether he was not aware that the Chinese were moving up to this pass in strength and probably were already at the other end and unless they were stopped at this pass, the security of the entire 4 Division would be in jeopardy, because the Chinese would make a direct bid for Bomdila and come to the rear of our troops. But Kaul discounted this and said that the route from Poshing La to Bomdila was long and difficult and he did not

consider that the enemy could come by that route in any strength. Only odd infiltrators could come, whom he could mop up a few miles north of Bomdila. I disagreed and told him that the fight on the Nyamkachu front had shown the ability of the Chinese troops to march long distances almost self-contained and so their ability to come through Poshing La and threaten Bomdila should not be underestimated. Moreover, we had seen a continuous stream of Chinese troops moving along the Tawangchu towards Poshing La and this could not be merely a walking exercise and, therefore, we should expect not odd infiltrators but the arrival of Chinese troops in more than a battalion strength through this Pass. I also mentioned to him our fears about Bangazong and that the Div. Commander had discounted the information given to him by the Assistant Director and the Additional Political Officer. Kaul then said that his resources were not enough for a proper defence of NEFA and he required a minimum of two more Divisions if he were to discharge his responsibility and without additional troops he could not defend the entire frontier. I then asked him whether he had reported his requirements to Thapar who was at Tezpur till the 9th morning, but he said that he could not convince Thapar and urged that I should communicate his views to the Prime Minister and press for large-scale reinforcements to be sent to him. About the Walong sector, he was a little more confident, though here also he complained of shortage of troops and more particularly of his maintenance difficulties. He wanted to send more troops to Limeking, Mechuka and Tuting and stated that he required one additional Division for the Kameng front and another for the rest of NEFA.

I found Kaul to be rather off-colour. He had worked himself to the conviction that the Chinese march forward would be irresistible and he had been given a hopeless task to stop them. Thus, long before the Chinese commenced their next push forward on the Tawangchu front, Kaul seemed to have lost the battle. I came back to our office at Tezpur extremely disappointed and dejected. I mentioned to our Officers (Bisht, Charanji, Palit, etc.) that we were going to lose Bomdila, which meant another servere defeat in NEFA, because the Corps Commander

would not or could not defend Poshing La and Bangazong.

I came back that evening to Delhi and before the next morning's defence meeting I told Thapar about Kaul's demand of two additional Divisions and mentioned this to the Prime Minister at the meeting itself. Thapar said that it was difficult to spare two Divisions but he was trying to collect one more Division for NEFA. He said that Intelligence reports showed that the Chinese were building up on the Chushul front and he had to send extra troops to Ladakh also. And he could not empty the Pakistan front where the bulk of his troops were located. He said that he was sending Sen to Tezpur to discuss Kaul's difficulties in detail and make a fresh assessment of the additional troop requirements.

Sen went the next day and returned to Delhi on the 15th and at the Defence meeting that day he said that both Sela and Walong positions were impregnable and they would be held. This assessment naturally made all of us very happy, but little did we realise that by that time both these positions were threatened and another big retreat would soon start. Thapar said that he had emptied Nagaland and had sent all the troops from there to NEFA and Kaul had now at his disposal more than three Divisions.

Though I have mentioned this earlier, it would be useful to repeat here one real difficulty the Army Headquarters was feeling. Our reports of Pakistan intelligence of the month of June had clearly warned us that Ayub was waiting for an opportunity when India would be embroiled in the fighting with the Chinese guerrillas in the mountains of NEFA and other sectors, and he would be in a position to swamp the whole of Punjab with his modernised army and his strong armour. This had always remained in the minds of the Army Headquarters and, in sending any reinforcements to NEFA, the Punjab and Kashmir sectors, where the bulk of the Indian army was located, were left undisturbed as far as possible. One Division had already been pulled out. It would spell danger if these sectors were further denuded of troops. But it was only in this sector that the army was in proper Divisional formation and had the

best equipment. So when the COAS was raising new Divisions in NEFA he was really pulling out odd battalions from all over the rest of India, some with deficient equipment. He had no other alternative. The only full formation that he got was from Nagaland. Some criticism has been levelled against this process of building up new Divisions as a result of which there was no cohesion between the different units and battalions were new to each other and brigades were formed out of the blue and so no formation above the battalion could consolidate itself into a close-knit fighting unit. Moreover some of the battalions and ancillary units came from the warm plains areas and found the terrain unfamiliar, cold too severe and some of the heights like Sela forbidding. But in the conditions in which we were placed at that time, it was not possible for the Army Headquarters to have done any better. Whilst voicing this criticism, no one has suggested any other alternative. Kaul was the CGS and knew the exact situation and he could have suggested whence complete formations could be got without exposing the Pakistan front too much. And the critics forgot the amount of effort that the Army Headquarters had put in to meet the needs of all the fronts. It must go to the credit of the Offg. CGS, Dhillon, that he was able to move such large numbers of men and material over a long communication link to Assam and then to NEFA and bring up the strength of the units almost to the required level. Given another seven days, the build-up would have been complete, consolidation would have been possible, more automatic arms would have been available and near parity achieved. But the Chinese were also getting ready and they struck before our troops could be fully in position.

In Ladakh, the Chinese, after completing their tasks in the Daulat Beg Oldi, Galwan and Demchok sectors, had concentrated all their forces against Chushul which was the Indian strong point in Ladakh. The Air Force did a remarkable job to lift AMX tanks to Chushul and ultimately this saved Chushul airfield as well as the Chushul Brigade. On or about November 13, we received information that though Chushul was being strongly protected, the route from Dungti to Chushul was not and

the Chinese could easily come through Rezang La and cut it thus isolating Chushul from Leh. I mentioned this to the Prime Minister and that night when the COAS met him, he enquired whether Rezang La was being protected and suggested that the COAS might consider if this was necessary to protect the road link with Leh. As a result, a Company of Jats under Maj. Shaitan Singh was posted to Rezang La to prevent a Chinese thrust through this pass to take Chushul from the rear.

The battle that raged in the Walong sector from November 14 to 16, by which time the Chinese had broken the Indian resistance, has been vividly described by Maj. Johri in his book, *Chinese Invasion of Nefa.* The 11 Brigade under Brig. Rawlley had four battalions here—6 Kumaon, 4 Sikhs, 3/3 Gurkhas and a battalion of the Dogras which was just coming in. Besides these, there were two wings of the Assam Rifles. After throwing the Indians out of Kibithoo, the Chinese came and occupied a hill feature called Ashe. Whilst the Indian troops occupied high-hill features to a distance of five to six miles surrounding Walong, they forgot to occupy the most dominating height called the Yellow Pimple, the tallest in this area. The Chinese took advantage of this oversight and built a track from Ashe to this height and established mortar positions there from which they overlooked the Indian position and started bombardment. The first attempt to dislodge the Chinese was made by 6 Kumaon, but it failed. The second attempt was made on November 14, again by the same unit which almost reached the top but had ultimately to give up the attempt due to inadequate artillery support and reinforcements. As they retreated, the Chinese followed them and the general Chinese offensive started from November 15 all along this sector.

There was no loss of heart by any one in this sector and each unit, whether it was a section or a platoon or a company or more, fought hard, suffered serious casualties and inflicted more severe casualties on the Chinese. The ·303 rifles and the Brens did the damage and the absence of semi-automatic rifles was not felt. But the attackers came on and on, unmindful of the casualties they suffered, and ultimately one by one all the Indian

defence positions were overrun. The weakness of these defence positions, as has been explained by Johri, was that they did not support each other, with the result that the Chinese took each position by turn and dislodged the Indians from one after the other. In the meantime, whilst they were fighting a frontal battle, the Chinese, following their usual tactics, had infiltrated from the left and the right to the rear and endangered the Brigade position at Walong itself. The Brigade Headquarters was not only reduced but its retreat was also cut and the retreating Indian troops were followed and attacked again and again so that these units got no chance to reform again. The result was that after heroically resisting for three days, our formations practically dissolved into small groups and the survivors walked all the way back to Hayuliang leaving behind most of the dead and the injured. Practically all the equipment also was left behind. The Chinese perpetrated untold cruelties on the brave wounded Sikhs. Many of them were tied and then dragged and their brains were battered. One thing, however, stands out in this sector that there was no loss of nerve or indecision from the Brigade Commander down to the Jawan. The only weakness was that the Brigade Commander had just taken over this Brigade and had not had enough time to look round and consolidate all his positions. Also one battalion, the Dogras, was just arriving and was yet disorganised when the Chinese attacked. Given a little more time, a couple of days perhaps, the Brigade could have held out against the Chinese much longer. But it must be conceded that the Chinese displayed superb tactics, leadership and grit, isolated each Indian position from the rest and mounted their general offensive only when they were sure that they had taken the rear of the Indian positions. Mao's guerrilla tactics—"Enemy's rear is your front"—was followed correctly and paid rich dividends.

In the Mechuka sector, the Chinese crossed Lola and marched nearly 30 miles south towards Mechuka. There were two battalions there—the Gurkhas and the Madrasis. Unfortunately, by the time the Chinese reached the outskirts of Mechuka, the general order of withdrawal from NEFA had been flashed by the Corps Headquarters to all units and, without firing a shot, both the

battalions hastily withdrew leaving all their equipment and stores behind. The Mechuka position was such as could have been held by the two battalions indefinitely because the Chinese line of communication had already been over-stretched and there was an airfield and a helipad to receive supplies. But here also the Chinese before attacking Mechuka had by-passed it and gone nearly 20 miles south to form road blocks. The Madras Battalion, which took the road straight down south towards Ziro, just escaped an ambush and road blocks by the Chinese who were coming along the left bank of the Subansiri River and had to build a bridge to cross the river to ambush this Battalion retreating along the right bank. The Gurkha Battalion, apprehending that its retreat might be cut off, tried to cross the range which separated Mechuka from Limeking area and was not heard of later. Next year their bodies were found in the snows and the Battalion seems to have perished in a snow-storm. There was a theory that this Battalion was attacked by the tribals, but this was not correct. There was no sign of any fighting or any bullet injuries or wounds on the dead bodies. It was reported that from Mechuka the Chinese had reached within twenty miles of Ziro but this was not confirmed.

In the Longju sector also, the Chinese came fairly deep. As there were no Indian troops there and the Assam Rifles had also withdrawn, there was no engagement. The Chinese came through Gelling Pass and took Tuting from the rear but the administration and the troops had been withdrawn before the Chinese arrived. So there was no fighting in this sector also.

The biggest Chinese pressure was, of course, in the Kameng sector, being protected by the 4 Infantry Division which had then nine battalions and two were due to reach on October 18. There is evidence that the Chinese brought another fresh Division (later identified as the 55 Division) straight from Sining. This Division with all its equipment and stores covered the distance from Sining to Tawang (1300 miles) in exactly eight days—a record performance of which any army could be proud. This was one of their crack Divisions and, as soon as it reached Tawang, which was about November 15, the pressure on the Sela position

started. By that date, the Chinese troops had crossed Poshing La and when two days later the IV Corps belatedly ordered this route to be defended and a detachment of the 5 Guards was sent forward to Thembang about six miles north of Bomdila, it found the Chinese already entrenched there. The Chinese attacked the Guards immediately and, after some fighting, the Guards Battalion was rendered ineffective and was lost for further operations. The Chinese did not allow the Indians to recover their breath and were soon on the outskirts of Bomdila. Following their normal tactics, one unit from this force cut the Bomdila-Dirang Road and another unit pressed forward, by-passing Bomdila, to Tenga valley where it laid an ambush both against the retreating Indian troops as well as against reinforcements coming from Tezpur. No attempt was made immediately to take Bomdila which would fall in due course and in the meantime the Chinese troops occupied the defences round Bomdila vacated by the Indians. It was a superbly executed movement and, practically without any fighting, two Chinese Battalions overran and surrounded the Brigade position at Bomdila and forced the Indian troops to retreat in haste and disorder. 6/8 Gurkha Rifles and 3 J and K Rifles which were coming from Tezpur for reinforcing Dirang and Bomdila, were intercepted in Tenga valley and suffered severe casualties. The Chinese Captain in charge of this movement was reportedly promoted to the rank of Colonel as a reward, while the Chinese troops were still at Bomdila. Another detachment of Chinese troops crossed the supposedly impossible pass of Bangazong and came down to the foothills where they took their positions on almost every track coming down from Bomdila-Dirang Sengezong-Sela Road. A part of these troops crossing the pass at Bangazong also cut the route between Sela and Sengezong. Another unit coming from Kiya La to the right had infiltrated behind the Indian positions and was astride the road between Dirang to Sengezong. Thus by November 17 the road from the foothills to Sela had been cut at four places by the Chinese, at Tenga valley between the foothills and Bomdila, between Bomdila and Dirang, between Dirang and Sengezong and between Sengezong and Sela. Besides this, they had infiltrated right up to the foothills.

Simultaneously with this, the crack Chinese Division, that had come from Sining, started pushing against the main Sela position. The first severe attack by the Chinese on the 4 Garhwal entrenched on the Nurnang-Jhang position on the slopes below Sela was beaten back; but the Chinese attacked again and, even though beaten back a second time, they never decreased their pressure, and to quote a Garhwali Subedar, though their front was yet unbroken they found the Chinese had come to their rear and were in their "Langar". In the meantime, other Chinese units in small and big numbers had crossed the Tawangchu river at innumerable points, climbed the hills and taken up positions on all heights overlooking the various passes. This infiltration had not started on the 15th but earlier and when the main pressure was exerted on the Sela front on the 15th, the Chinese were already in good numbers behind and overlooking our defence positions. The Chinese had to take Sela to bring their vehicles with supplies. Otherwise, Sela was unimportant because the Chinese had already swarmed across the hills and were on the eastern side of the ridge which was supposed to have been the dividing line. With the pressure of the Chinese mounting, the 4 Garhwal was asked to withdraw to the Sela position. But this withdrawal seemed to have sparked off a series of withdrawals and the Sikh Light Infantry left its positions and soon the other units were following suit.

At this time Pathania seems to have lost his nerve and wanted to withdraw the Brigade from Sela ridge to his Div. Headquarters to make that safe. He ordered the Brigade Commander to withdraw all his units to Dirang and detailed the 2 Rajput to hold the line of retreat for the withdrawal of the Brigade. This was an impossible order. There were five battalions on the ridge and one thin winding hilly road leading to Dirang—50 miles away. Withdrawal even in ordinary times would require detailed planning and would take several days to be completed. But with the Chinese in great strength pressing close on the heels of the Indian troops, this withdrawal was bound to end in catastrophe. And what was the justification for this order when the Division itself was going to discard Dirang and make for the

plains? The Brigade Commander at Sela was at first not willing to withdraw, because he had sufficient stores to last for at least seven days; but already the rot had started; the talk and rumour of withdrawal had percolated to all the units; the withdrawal of the 4 Garhwal from the slopes below Sela had been taken as an indication of a general withdrawal and in many cases units started withdrawing without any order. Except the 4 Garhwal, which had fought a tough battle for nearly two days, the other units had not fired a shot. The Brigade Commander at that stage lost control and all his five battalions simultaneously started retreating along the road from Sela to Sengezong causing severe congestion. Units were mixed up and it was no longer possible for the Battalion Commanders to separate their units and lead them properly. The Chinese were following close on their heels and near Sengezong the retreating Indian army was ambushed heavily by the enemy who had crossed from Bangazong or Kiya La. If even one battalion could have been mobilised, it should have been possible to clear this ambush, but the confusion was so great that the massed men of the retreating battalions, except providing an easy target to the Chinese snipers, could do little to clear the block. In that confusion, all semblance of order disappeared and the entire Brigade then disintegrated and each man was more or less left to escape as best as he could. Some ran to the north of the road but most to the south and those who escaped further Chinese ambushes near the foothills ultimately succeeded in reaching the plains in a state of utter exhaustion. They suffered untold privations and many had not had any meals for several days and they lived only on grass and water. Many perished on the way.

The 4 Division Commander did not wait for the arrival of the 62 Brigade from Sela. On the 17th he had sent an SOS to the Corps for permission to withdraw the Brigade. Kaul was away. Thapar and Sen were at the Corps Headquarters. They waited for Kaul to return as the Brigade position was not immediately threatened. When Kaul returned at night, he issued an order to hold as long as possible and then withdraw. With two such alternatives before him, the Division Commander, who was wanting

to withdraw, naturally took the second alternative.* There is also evidence that the Div. Headquarters had mostly evacuated on the 17th evening without informing the Corps Headquarters and on the 18th morning the rest of the Div. Headquarters withdrew and Pathania appeared in the Assam plains three days later. One battalion of the Brigade at Dirang was left behind without any orders. When making its way south it was captured by the Chinese. The fact that the Chinese ambushes were laid by small groups of men only and not in great strength and could have been cleared if some determination had been shown was proved when Capt. Rawat and Maj. D'Souza on their way to Bomdila from Dirang encountered an ambush a few miles east of Dirang and quite easily succeeded in clearing it by chasing the enemy away.

The 2 Rajput, which had been sent to hold the line of retreat for the 62 Brigade, waited in vain for the whole of the 18th east of Sengezong and at last tiring of the wait and receiving no communication from the Div. Headquarters returned to Dirang only to find it empty. It was immediately set upon by the Chinese and it withdrew to the south to be further ambushed a few days later when almost approaching the plains and was killed almost to a man. The brave Battalion Commander also died.

The Bomdila Brigade, which had already lost a battalion at Thembang, was ordered by IV Corps on the 17th night to clear the Dirang road of Chinese ambushes. The Brigade Commander at first protested as he did not have adequate troops for his defence but was assured by the Corps that two battalions, the J and K Rifles and the Gurkhas, would reach on the 18th morning. That morning without waiting for these two battalions to reach, he despatched two Companies of Sikh Light Infantry to clear the road. But within a few miles of Bomdila, these two Companies encountered fire from the Chinese and so returned to Bomdila only to find that their trenches and defence positions had been occupied by the Chinese who then started bombarding the Indian positions. When

*There is some dispute about this order as to who issued it from the Corps Headquarters and when. It is, however, immaterial as the Div. Commander was going to withdraw in any case.

the Brigade Commander heard that the Division had withdrawn, he also decided to do the same and reached his rear Headquarters at Rupa without leaving any withdrawal plans with the result that many units stayed behind at their defences. In the meantime, the advance elements of the J and K Rifles which was coming to Bomdila to join the brigade reached Bomdila as no orders had reached them to halt their forward movement. The Brigade Commander retrieved the situation by going back to Bomdila that night and decided on final withdrawal in the early hours of the morning of 19th. So by sunrise on that day, Bomdila was deserted. The Gurkha Battalion which was in the meantime coming up to Bomdila was ambushed at Tengapani and suffered severe losses. However, it covered the retreat of the brigade to Rupa but the Chinese followed the Indians there also. Then the brigade retreated to Chako near the foothills. At night the Chinese surrounded the position and fired from all directions causing severe casualties. The survivors, including the Brigadier, reached the plains on the 20th morning. However, this was the only brigade which managed to retain its cohesion and tried to make a planned withdrawal till it was finally overwhelmed at Chako.

Thus within four days from the 16th the Chinese had overrun practically the entire Kameng Division and had completely destroyed the 4 Infantry Division comprising nearly 11 battalions.

The story was, however, different in Ladakh. By the 16th the Chinese had concentrated all their troops against Chushul. On the 17th the Chinese started attacking the high grounds surrounding this place and after severe fighting succeeded in occupying some of them. They trained their mortars on Chushul and the airfield but our AMX guns opened up and managed to halt any further Chinese advance. On the 17th morning the Chinese had, however, attacked our Company position at Rezang La and, after several hours of severe fighting, succeeded in over-running it and the defenders died practically to a man. However, Chushul held out and the Chinese did not dare come down from their positions on the hills. It is understood that Maj.-Gen. Grewal had been called in to the Corps Headquarters at Udhampur on the

17th and he was advised by the Corps Commander to withdraw from the Chushul position, which he refused to do. There he got the information about the Chinese attack and reached his forward position in blinding weather covering the distance to Leh by plane and thence partly by jeep and partly on foot. The Brigade Commander, Raina also did not lose his wits and, though he made some withdrawals to Tsogatsalu as the Dungti route was cut, he held on to the main Chushul position demonstrating what the determination of a Commander could achieve.

Detailed descriptions of the battles in Kameng Division have been given by several writers, including Johri, Kaul and Mankekar. So it is needless to go into those details again. There is, as is bound to be, a good deal of difference in the details given by the various writers. No one could then or even now get a complete picture of all that had happened to the different units. The Corps was hardly in touch with what was happening in the front, nor was the Division. Even the Brigade Headquarters was not sure of what was happening to its various battalions. It was clear that excepting the Garhwal Rifles, which had fought well for the first two days and the Guards Battalion which fought at Thembang for a few hours, the other units did not fight and once the retreat commenced there was all round confusion and the main aim of everybody individually or collectively was to escape somehow or other to the plains of Assam where the Division Commander had preceded them. Had each Brigade stood fast and repelled Chinese attacks, thus denying the Chinese the road communication to Bomdila, the situation might have been saved. With new reinforcements coming from the plains, the Chinese advance parties could have been folded up. Even guerrillas require supplies and, though each Chinese soldier carried five or six days' dry rations on his person, even this would be exhausted if further supplies did not come. If the Indian positions had been held, these guerrillas would have been deprived of the rich harvest which they made of the Indian supplies left behind. In any case, if a decision had been taken to stand fast and fight, the casualties suffered by the Indians would certainly not have been more than what they suffered in flight and the country would have been spared the disgrace.

A howl went up again about the so-called political interference. But every phase of the operations in NEFA was entirely in the hands of the military commanders and they did all the planning and took all the decisions. There was no political interference or pressure at any place. Obviously India's soil had to be defended, but where exactly the army would make its stand was left entirely to the army to decide. Kaul only quotes one Brigadier of his staff, who apparently did not approve of the Sela position, but he does not give his own views. In any case, he had had enough time to organise the defence. No one had fettered his discretion in any way.

But no defence, however strong, can stand unless the men defending the position have the heart to defend it. A lot of American and British arms had by then reached NEFA and had been distributed among the troops and it was not the inadequacy of weapons that really counted but the weaknesses of the command and the higher up it went the worse it became; and at the Division and Corps level, there was a good deal of confusion and the Commanders did not seem to know what they were going to do and how. As against this want of planning, training, direction, command and even execution, the Chinese were sure of their aims and knew exactly how to achieve them. They were well-trained, ready to take the risk and even their junior commanders showed superb power of command and control and also a deep knowledge of the soldiers' psychology in war. The Chinese carried out their plans in perfect order, each unit reaching its destination in time and, functioning as parts of a well-oiled machine, did exactly as it had been told. The whole complicated movement worked like a symphony orchestra, each beat or note fitting in its place and at the appropriate time. And yet the unit commanders had the scope to display much initiative and ingenuity. Their superiority in numbers was marginal and the superiority of arms was felt only in the case of mortars. But the Indians were always caught in hollows, on flat grounds and on passes, while the Chinese invariably climbed the highest peaks shunned by the Indians and overlooked the latter's positions and saturated them with mortar fire. They had actively patrolled not only their own forward

areas but the rear of Indian lines and had collected accurate information of Indian dispositions and strength. As against this, there had been hardly any patrolling by the Indian troops and generally when any patrol went out it did so under the vigilant eyes of the Chinese and was soon surrounded and destroyed. When any ambush was laid, soon the ambushers got ambushed and suffered severe casualties. Our lines of communication were cut by the Chinese at so many places but not at even one place did we cut or even attempt to cut the Chinese lines which were more extended than ours. We held only static positions, but the Chinese displayed tremendous mobility. When the Chinese attacked any Indian position, they fired at it from all directions and the Indians did not know where the fire was coming from and so seemed to be fighting against an invisible enemy. Gradually the feeling crept in the minds of the troops that the Chinese soldiers were something like *bhoots* (spirits) whom no human could fight and so the fear of the unknown, the invisible and the invincible gripped them. This was all due to want of training and indoctrination, not so much the shortage of equipment, and, as Kheravery has clearly proved, if more had been given more would have been lost causing more serious repercussions all round.

It has been alleged that there was a good deal of local cooperation by the NEFA tribals with the Chinese and this has been used to prove that there was failure of the NEFA administration. Actually, the number of individuals who cooperated could be counted on one's fingers and this would happen in any country and a few quislings can be found anywhere. But by and large, the NEFA population kept away from the Chinese and did not respond to Chinese attempts to cultivate or fraternise with them. They could not openly non-cooperate but they did not offer any cooperation either; when forced to do any work, they did it. Actually, for porterage the Chinese brought in a large number of Northern Tibetans and did not depend on the local tribals. As regards our own army, porters were available whenever required and shortages that occurred were due to the shortage of porters in NEFA even in normal times as the NEFA tribals did not like the porter's work. Any expectation that the tribals should have

resisted the Chinese is based on wrong premises as the population had not been taught to resist and any training to them on those lines would have been opposed by the army as posing security danger. So there is no point in blaming the NEFA population for not resisting the Chinese actively. They had not been psychologically indoctrinated; they had not been trained; they had not been equipped for that purpose; and so they could not be expected to resist the enemy. Also, if they had any desire to resist, they knew that as things had turned out, they could get no assistance from the Indian side once NEFA had been vacated.

Kaul has alleged that the Air Force was not used in close support of the army and has made a grievance that whilst he was denied that support, the army fighting the Pakistanis in 1965 got full support. Close support at any particular place has to be asked for by the army before the Air Force can go in. I do not think Kaul had asked for air support at any particular place in NEFA during the fighting. He could not have done it, because he had no control over the fighting, and things moved faster than he could imagine and positions had fallen before he knew that they had. At what point was, therefore, close air support to be given? Moreover, excepting the first day's fighting on the Sela front, there was hardly any fighting by the Indian troops in the Kameng Division. And even on the first day the positions were so inter-locked, the Chinese swarming behind the Indian lines in the thickly wooded territory and in the deep ravines, that any air strike would have been quite ineffective to stop the Chinese but might have endangered the safety of our own troops. The question of air support had been considered at the Headquarters and the Chief of Air Staff had weighed all the points before coming to the conclusion that, excepting endangering his own planes, bombing would produce little or no result and might even adversely affect Indian positions by bombs falling on them. Also, due to the vagaries of the NEFA weather, continued air support for any length of time was not possible. In the war with Pakistan, the position was different; fronts were well-defined; Indian and Pakistani armies were locked in battle on the plains of Punjab; the targets were clear and visible the whole day and air strikes were

called for by the army when pressed and the place where the air strike was to be delivered did not shift. So the air force did not spare itself. But such conditions did not exist in NEFA. Hence the point raised is quite untenable.

24 Evacuation of Tezpur

By about November 10, when it was plain that the Chinese were poised for a massive attack on our positions all along the NEFA frontier, it was decided that under the Defence of India Rules further security precautions should be taken in North Bengal and Assam and throughout the country in general to prevent any possible betrayals and acts of sabotage in support of the enemy. There was a large number of Chinese nationals in Assam and many of them were working in the tea gardens north of the Brahmaputra. There was a fair number of Chinese in Kalimpong and Darjeeling besides a very large number of them in Calcutta. Many of them had worked in collusion with the Chinese Consulate in Calcutta till it was closed and it was noticed that there was much jubilation amongst these people over the Chinese victory at Nyamkachu and Kibithoo in the month of October. The State Governments of Assam and West Bengal had both represented to the Government of India that these foreign nationals, who were in obvious sympathy with China, posed a serious security danger when the frontiers were endangered and so they should be detained and removed from at least Assam and North Bengal. In a defence meeting on or about November 13, the Prime Minister enquired from me what steps were being taken to immobilise these persons and I replied that the Home Ministry was considering the necessary steps. The Prime Minister said that all these Chinese nationals should be removed from Assam and North Bengal and he asked me to suggest this action to the Home Minister. When Vishwanathan (Home Secretary) and I met the Home Minister in the afternoon and proposed this action, somehow or other the Home Minister did not react. The question at that time also arose of the detention of some of the Marxist Communist leaders who were talking in equivocal terms about the

border question. Also there were some in West Bengal and Assam who were known as China supporters. The next day the Prime Minister again enquired from me whether the Home Ministry had taken a decision, to which I replied that the matter was still under consideration. I also mentioned this at the meeting of the Secretaries' Committee, which was also of the view that action should immediately be taken against the Chinese nationals in India and the extremist Marxist Communist leaders. But for some reason or other the Home Minister still would not decide. However, on the 17th, when the news of the fall of Walong was received and other disasters seemed imminent, Vishwanathan, L. P. Singh and myself argued this out with Sri Shastri and he was at last convinced that further delay in taking this very necessary security measure might lead to disastrous consequences. On that day orders were issued to all the States to arrest and detain under the Defence of India Rules extremist leaders amongst the Marxist Communists and also arrest and remove from Assam and North Bengal all Chinese nationals. Once the clearance to this action had been received the implementation followed quickly. The IB in consultation with the State CID's had kept ready lists of persons to be arrested apprehending that such a contingency would arise and, with the approval of the Minister, these were immediately flashed to the respective State CID's and it goes to the credit of the State Governments and their police that within 24 hours of the receipt of the orders most of the arrests had been completed and the Chinese from Assam and North Bengal were moved out from these areas within 48 hours. Subsequently a camp was established at Deoli in Rajasthan where these detained Chinese nationals were kept.

On November 19, after the Chinese attack on the Gurkhas and the J and K Rifles at Chako, it was clear that the entire 4 Division evacuating from Kameng had been destroyed. The question then confronting the Corps Commander was whether the Chinese could and would come any further and capture Tezpur and other parts of North Assam. He believed that he could not organise any defence against the Chinese north of the

Brahmaputra river. I would not say that his assessment was entirely incorrect so far as the possibilities went. But one has to carefully weigh the possible against the probable and then come to a decision on such an important matter. Though Kaul apparently had taken into account the fact that the 27 Division under Maj.-Gen. Bhandari was then collecting at Tezpur and could, if properly organised and led, fight the Chinese on equal terms on the plains, he knew that the heavy equipment of this Division was yet to reach them and the men had arrived mostly with their personal and other light arms and could not yet be reckoned as a fighting Division. Moreover, the Chinese had the capacity to paradrop troops on Tezpur airfield using Chengtu as their base, though we were not aware of any preparation to that effect. In the state of general demoralisation, the Corps Commander accepted as inevitable the worst situation that might develop and he apparently came to the conclusion that the Chinese would advance into the plains and could not be held north of the Brahmaputra river. His decision was further precipitated by the rumour spread by an Army Major who, fleeing from Chako, had given out that he had seen the Chinese enter the plains. Without verifying this information the Corps Commander ordered the withdrawal of all troops and even the Border Roads Organisation from North Assam to Gauhati and Nowgong across the Brahmaputra. When the European tea-planters approached him for advice, they were also told to leave North Assam and the majority of them did so, leaving the labourers behind in the gardens but without arranging for any payment, which created much distress and led to some disturbances. Orders were also issued to all the troops still in the forward positions like Limeking, Mechuka, Tuting, etc. to withdraw. With them the civilian officers of the NEFA administration also started withdrawing.

On November 20, the great move-back started. It was a frightful sight to see the Border Roads Organisation with its heavy trucks and huge engineering and earth-moving vehicles cluttering along the roads of Tezpur to the river bank where it monopolised

the two available ferries for practically the whole day. Our office informed us about this position and sought orders and we directed that if the army was withdrawing from the forward posts the Intelligence posts should also withdraw but Tezpur Office should remain open and should not be abandoned till further Chinese intentions were known. Utter confusion prevailed in Tezpur from the mid-morning of the 20th and this became worse confounded by the arrival from Delhi of the Director General of Civil Defence with a fresh order of the Home Ministry to the effect that all civilian staff should be withdrawn from areas threatened by the enemy. After communicating the order to the District officials, the Director General of Civil Defence himself went back by the afternoon plane to Gauhati leaving the civil staff nonplussed. In such confusion, two Assam Ministers, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Bhagwati, who were at Tezpur that day, met the Corps Commander to find out what the position was. The Corps Commander categorically told them that the Indian forces had been completely defeated and their morale shattered. The Chinese, he said, outnumbered the Indian forces several times and had better equipment and much superior fire power. They had captured practically the entire equipment and stores of the Indian Army not only in Kameng Division but all along the NEFA frontier and they had also captured a large number of vehicles and trucks and were now in a position to make a bid for Tezpur and other parts of North Assam. The food supplies which they had captured from the Indian stores would last them for a month. He also apprehended that even before the Chinese army from Kameng reached Tezpur, the Chinese would make a large-scale drop of paratroopers at Tezpur and Missamari airfields and capture them and then they would be able to land plane-loads of troops and stores at their will. The Indian army had no defence against this. He saw no hope of holding North Assam against the Chinese and said that he had warned the Government as early as October about such a possibility coming to pass. He told the Assam Ministers that he had, therefore, decided to withdraw south of the Brahmaputra and he was also withdrawing his Corps Headquarters. When asked what he would advise the civil

administration to do and also the civilians, Kaul said that it was not his concern and it was for the Government to decide what should be done with the civilians.

This talk dazed the two Ministers, who then flew back to Gauhati with the Director General of Civil Defence to report to the Assam Cabinet the state of affairs in Tezpur and to decide what steps should be taken in the circumstances. Then followed the great civilian exodus from Tezpur. The treasury was emptied; notes were burnt or sent across to Nowgong; coins dumped in tanks; hospitals and jails cleared of the inmates; shops closed; and the civilian staff and even the police started withdrawing from Tezpur following the footsteps of the army. The only officers who remained behind that night were the Corps Commander himself and his Staff Officer, Brigadier K.K. Singh, the Commissioner and the District Magistrate, the DIG of Police and the SP and the staff of our Intelligence Office. That night when the Commissioner and the DIG went to see the Corps Commander there was not a *jawan* to be seen anywhere in the Corps Headquarters which used to bristle with troops previously and the Corps Commander gave them a frightful forecast of what was going to happen. He said that the Chinese were rolling down the hills at tremendous speed and would be on the outskirts of Tezpur before day-break. There was nothing to prevent the inexorable march of this tremendous fighting force and he also apprehended that early next morning would see the sky darkening with hundreds of Chinese paratroopers dropping from the sky.

The situation was fantastic. Whilst the older troops were withdrawing from North Assam, new troops of the 27 Division were still being flown into Tezpur. Even if the Corps Commander's worst apprehensions came true, and the Chinese did attempt to come further into Assam and paradrop troops, this operation was not very simple. The paratroopers could have been only lightly armed and the troops of the 27 Division could easily have formed a strong ring round the airport to protect it and they would have no doubt succeeded in mopping up the Chinese paratroopers. Moreover, on land the Chinese lines of communication were already over-extended. It should have

been apparent that the Chinese could not continue their offensive much longer as they had to depend on one thin road of indifferent standard nearly 200 miles long from their border at Bumla via Tawang, Sela, Dirang, Bomdila, Tenga, Rupa, etc. Fresh Indian troops on the plains near the foothills could have effectively thwarted any further Chinese advance. Even if the Chinese dared advance, they would be short of almost every kind of supply and, therefore, the entire advantage would be on the Indian side. Moreover, the population of the plains was solidly anti-Chinese and, with possible fifth columnists having been moved out, there was no fear of the Chinese getting any sympathy or support from the local people. They could not get any sympathy or active support from the hill people either. In the plains they could not have adopted the same tactics as they had done in the hills and which had carried them at almost lightning speed from Tawangchu to Chako in just three days. The whole of November 20 was available for organising defences round Tezpur and hold out whilst fresh troops would be arriving. So much could have been done and had been done in the past at so many places and in so many wars in different countries and the same could have been done at Tezpur also. Even in India did not Kohima and Imphal hold out stubbornly against the Japanese which ultimately turned the tide of the Japanese advance?

The need here was of a Commander who could restore heart to his withdrawing forces, who could arm and organise every unit capable of firing a rifle, the Border Roads Organisation, the Armed Police, the tea-planters and even the civilians, and with the new Division which was forming at Tezpur as the core, not only form a strong line of defence along the foothills but throw back the Chinese from the plains back into the hills. But that determination was, unfortunately, not visible. And hence followed the most inglorious chapter of India's military withdrawal from North Assam in panic, leaving the civilian population in the lurch apparently at the mercy of the Chinese. There was to be no repetition in Tezpur in November, 1962, of the glorious resistance of Leningrad or Stalingrad or even of Kohima and Imphal. The people of Assam were shocked and stood still to watch the

advancing Chinese hordes who, they had been told, were inexorably moving forward like a tidal wave, which nothing could stop. But it is to their credit that several groups organised themselves and decided to fight the Chinese and protect themselves even ifthere was no civil administration.

Thapar, who had been at Tezpur on the 18th, flew back to Delhi on the 19th night and handed over his resignation to the Prime Minister. A rumour had gone round since the morning that this was going to happen and speculations were afoot about his successor. Thapar behaved as an honourable soldier. He took the blame on himself for the reverses which his troops had suffered and offered to quit to allow a new Commander to come and take over the command.

I was summoned by Sri Shastri at 11 o'clock that night in his room in South Block. He was alone. He was pacing the room from one end to the other as was usual with him whenever he was in doubt or anxiety. He enquired from me if I knew that Thapar had resigned. On my replying in the affirmative, he said that the Prime Minister had asked him to consult me about the next Chief of Army Staff. He asked me to sit down and think about the matter. He went on pacing the room. I found that he had not had his dinner yet and so I telephoned to his house to send him some food, which arrived in half-an-hour's time. I told him that if the Government had decided to accept Thapar's resignation—though there was no reason for it—then obviously the next senior General, i.e. Choudhuri should take over. Shastriji asked me why I preferred Choudhuri to others. I said that there was no question of preference. Choudhuri was the seniormost General after Thapar and those immediately below him did not have, to my knowledge, better records or more experience, and so Choudhuri would be the natural choice. Shastriji asked me if I knew Choudhuri personally and I replied in the affirmative and added that since 1951, he and I had worked closely in several theatres and I had no doubt about his competence. Shastriji asked me whether I knew that he was due to retire from the army within a few months. I replied in the affirmative and said that once he was promoted, the earlier order would lose its validity. Shastriji

then enquired if I knew that there was some opposition to Choudhury's induction as the Chief of Army Staff. I asked him if it was political pressure but he said that it was from a section of the civilians and service officers. I said that I had heard some rumours of this but I had thought that this was due to service jealousies and not on considerations of merit. Shastriji then came to the final point and asked me whether I would support Choudhuri from every point of view. I replied in the affirmative and gave my reasons. When Shastriji asked me whether I could suggest any alternative, I said that this question should not arise. I was there with Shastriji till about half-past twelve that night. Shastriji and I then came out and he went to see the Prime Minister. Next morning Choudhuri's name was announced as Thapar's successor. Choudhuri would have been appointed in any case on consideration of seniority and merit and there was no need to consult me. Probably some misgivings had been caused in the minds of Pandit Nehru and Sri Shastri by the adverse propaganda mentioned by the latter and they wanted these to be cleared before making the announcement.*

In those days we used to reach office very early. As soon as I came to office on the 20th morning I was told by the Army Headquarters that it was seriously thinking of abandoning Assam altogether and withdrawing all troops from both North and South Assam. There was divided opinion in the Army Headquarters itself about the wisdom of this move, but the Army Headquarters was going to put up a paper to the Cabinet that afternoon asking for orders on this issue. I was very upset. I went immediately to Shastriji who had also come to office early and told him about this. I urged that this move must be stopped and the Cabinet should not approve of it. Once we left Assam, North Bengal also could not be defended and the only defensive position would be east of Katihar (Bihar). The composition of the population of Assam State plus Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur, etc. was such that once the Chinese got into that area it would be impossible for us to get back Assam again, particularly

*Some writers have insinuated that Pandit Nehru wanted to appoint Lt.-Gen. Kaul. This is absolutely false. Kaul was at no time under consideration.

because East Pakistan would be blocking all lines of communication. Moreover, the territory would be parcelled out by the two new friends, China and Pakistan. I said that the Assamese had suffered a lot and they did not deserve to be deserted in a moment of danger; and if this was allowed to happen, with what face would we ask for their loyalty or claim Assam as a part of India? Sri Shastri saw my point but was non-committal. He was not sure that he would be able to interfere if the Army Headquarters pressed for withdrawal of troops from Assam for military reasons, particularly in the circumstances in which the army was placed at that time. I came back to my room and did some deep thinking. I made up my mind to quit the Intelligence Bureau and go to Assam to build up a resistance movement against the Chinese. I called my Joint Directors and told them the plan that I had worked out in my mind. I would move 7 or 8 battalions of armed police immediately to Jorhat and hold the whole of the area south of the Gauhati-Dibrugarh railway line, build up people's resistance and even if the Chinese occupied the plains south of the Brahmaputra, I would make their position untenable. I could even cross over to North Lakhimpur from Dibrugarh side and build up people's resistance in those areas also. It would have been impossible for the Chinese to hold the whole of this area under their grip and the Assamese people, whom I knew very well and who had a great history of resistance against foreign invaders, would, I was sure, respond readily and continue the resistance till India was in a position to win back this territory again. In any case, the Assamese and the Plains Tribals and the Khasis, Garos and others would not complain that they had been deserted by India. My plan was to hold strongly Silchar airport, which was deep south, as a firm base and to maintain my communication with India with the help of this air base. Agartala was not secure as it was right on the border of East Pakistan. I knew that if the Chinese came to the south bank, Jorhat and Dibrugarh airfields would also be denied to us; so Silchar was the only alternative. Between Gola Ghat, Haflong and Silchar was a vast stretch of mountainous territory full of deep jungles where we could hold out indefinitely.

Balbir Singh (Joint Director) and I immediately went to Air Marshal Engineer and requested him to lift these eight battalions of armed police to Jorhat at once. Engineer saw our point and he agreed. He had been extremely distressed by the reverses which the army had suffered due to their inaction in spite of all the support he had given by airdrops to the farthest limit of his capacity. He was still then shifting the 27 Division from Ambala to Tezpur. In spite of the fact that he was fully stretched, he agreed to come to our assistance. Jorhat, according to him, would be ideal and would not in any way conflict with the shifting of the troops to Tezpur and Gauhati and he suggested that we should concentrate at Dum Dum or Patna from where he would lift our force. Balbir undertook to collect the armed police from different States and from that very night they all started moving, some by air, some by road and rail, and the airlift of police started from Dum Dum from the early morning of November 21.

After arranging these moves, I asked for an urgent interview with the Prime Minister, who asked me to come for lunch which he was giving to the American Senators then in Delhi. I arrived at the Prime Minister's residence at 1 o'clock. When the Prime Minister saw me he took me aside to one corner and asked me what the matter was. Khera was also present near at hand. I informed him that the Army Headquarters was going to submit a plan that day to withdraw troops entirely from Assam and that this plan would be put up before the Cabinet at 3 p.m. I told him that I had mentioned this to Shastriji also and repeated my arguments against this move as it might produce far-reaching effects. I further said that if this step was taken, I would not like to continue any longer as the Director of Intelligence and would like to quit that post that very day and go to Assam to organise people's resistance movement and not return till this area was reconquered for India. The Prime Minister immediately reacted very favourably to the idea of people's resistance and asked me exactly what my plans were. I mentioned to him the arrangement we had made to shift 8 battalions of armed police to Assam immediately. The Prime Minister then asked me whether the police would stand by me,

and I assured him that no police in India would desert me. He then said that there was no reason for me to resign and I could do this work whilst continuing to be the DIB (Director, Intelligence Bureau). I said that this was not possible because the DIB's work was so heavy that those days I was working for over 18 hours a day with little sleep and the same was the condition of my Joint Directors. With the situation as it was likely to turn, the IB's responsibilities would increase further and there would be the need for the Director's presence at Delhi, as this services would be required at any time during day and night. Therefore, I could not function both as the DIB and as the leader of the guerrillas in Assam. Moreover, if Assam was lost, I would not like to continue as the DIB. The Prime Minister then asked me when I wanted to leave Delhi and I said I would go immediately and informed him that the Air Marshal had given me a plane to fly to Gauhati next morning. The Prime Minister asked me whether I would come back to Delhi off and on. I said, yes, so long as the Silchar airfield could be used and the Air Force could fly me, I would come to Delhi for consultations and to collect a good deal of material that I would require. I further said that after this visit which would be for consultations with the Chief Minister, local officers and my own staff in Assam, I hoped to come back after about ten days to be able to report to him the ground that I had been able to prepare. The Prime Minister then said that I should postpone the tendering of my resignation till I visited Delhi next and then the question could be further considered. He asked me whether I knew Bijoy Patnaik. I said that I knew a lot about him but I did not know him personally. The Prime Minister said that Bijoy Patnaik had met him that morning and had expressed a desire to go to Assam and organise people's resistance and he asked me that as Patnaik was also talking on the same lines as myself whether he could work with me. I agreed and said that in this mission anybody who agreed with my plans could join me. He then asked me whether I would take Kaul in my group. I demurred because, in his existing state of demoralisation, Kaul would not have been an asset in a guerrilla force.

Moreover, if he had faith in that type of resistance, he would have organised it in North Assam instead of ordering evacuation from it. The Prime Minister then said that he would send for me again that evening and let me know the decision of the Cabinet, if the Army Headquarters at all put up a paper asking for permission to withdraw completely from Assam.

After lunch I returned to my office and was gratified to hear that Balbir had by then been able to get in touch with all the Inspectors General of Police and had received enthusiastic response. He had been promised that the movements would start that very day and he was optimistic that the first plane-load of armed police might reach Jorhat about the same time I would be reaching Gauhati the next day. I made arrangements for wireless communications between Gauhati, Golaghat and Delhi and for wireless sets suitable for such long distance communications to be carried with me. My aim then was to make Golaghat my headquarters. I tried to meet the Home Minister to apprise him of these plans but he was very busy and so I could not see him till later in the evening.

At 6 p.m. the Prime Minister sent for me and informed me that the Army Headquarters had not pressed for withdrawal of the troops from the area south of the Brahmaputra and so there would not be any general withdrawal, though the troops were withdrawing from North Assam. He then suggested that there was, therefore, no occassion for my resignation. He, however, approved that I should go to Assam and organise the resistance movement and enquired whether I had contacted Bijoy Patnaik. I told him that I had contacted him on telephone and we were meeting that evening to fix up the details and if he was willing to come I would take him with me the next morning. The Prime Minister informed me that Indira Gandhi was also going to Tezpur next morning by a private plane. I did not like it as the Corps Commander expected the Chinese to be at Tezpur by then and I told him that this visit was not safe and should not be undertaken. Pandit Nehru replied, "Who can stop Indu (Indira) once she has made up her mind," and hoped that she would be all right and

asked me to ensure her safety and look after her at Tezpur.

At this time Shastriji sent for me and told me that the Prime Minister had told him about my plans and probably that was the reason why I was wanting to see him urgently that afternoon. I said, "yes". He agreed with me and added that, due to the very serious situation which had developed in Assam, the Prime Minister had asked him to go to Gauhati and also other places in Assam to study the situation and also help the State Government in every way possible and Shastriji wanted me to go with him. I told him that I had arranged my own plane but that could be made available for him, and I would gladly accompany him and remain with him as long as he remained in Assam and then stay back there when he would return. Later that evening I met Bijoy Patnaik in his house at Hailey Road and he said that he could not cool his heels in Orissa when one part of India was about to go under the Chinese and he wanted to go to Assam and work with the people to organise them against the invaders. He said that he had had a ring from the Prime Minister telling him to expect me to see him. Together we talked till about 9 o'clock and then we decided that he should also come with us and he telephoned to Shastriji and it was arranged that he would also be in the party. I then went home, had a quick meal and went back to my office where I worked till well past midnight writing out necessary instructions for disposal of work during my absence. I also contacted Assam and my staff told me that there was all round demoralisation among the people over the evacuation of North Assam and also resentment against the Centre on the ground that the Assamese had been let down. The Prime Minister's broadcast that evening to the people of Assam to keep steady in the face of this national disaster had, instead of rousing their spirit, further dampened it because the people apprehended that this broadcast was only meant to prepare them for worse disasters to come.

Since the beginning of the conflict with China, Hooja (Joint Director) had ordered our Monitoring Stations to maintain a day-and-night vigil on Peking Radio and very often we learnt of the developments at the frontier from that source earlier than

from our own Army sources. A little before 3 a.m. on November 21, I was roused from sleep by the Monitor of our Delhi Station, who said that earlier that night the Peking Radio had announced a cease-fire commencing from the midnight of the following night. The Monitor had taken the precaution of getting this cross-checked with our outstation Monitoring Stations and all of them had confirmed this message. It took me over half an hour to write down the monitored message which was quite long. The offer of cease-fire was conditional on Indian troops behaving properly and was to come into effect after another twenty hours. Instead of wasting time ringing up people at that time, I decided that I should hurry to the airport where we would be assembling shortly and exchange this information. I also told the Monitor to send the written message to Hooja at once for distribution to various recipients.

Then I got ready quickly and went to Bijoy Patnaik's place to pick him up. On the way I told him about the Chinese offer of cease-fire. When we came to the house of the Home Minister we found that the latter had already left for the airport. Patnaik wanted that we should go to the Prime Minister immediately but I said that as Shastriji would be waiting at the airport, we should go there first and then decide on the next move. We arrived at the airport which was crowded from one end to the other by passengers waiting for the Indian Airlines planes which had been commandeered by the Indian Air Force the previous day cancelling most of the civilian flights. When we met Shastriji he had already seen the newspaper announcing the Chinese cease-fire. L. P. Singh was also there. We started talking about the implications. I got the heavy wireless equipment which was to go with me loaded in the plane.

Sri Shastri then decided that we should consult the Prime Minister and get his instructions before leaving the capital. So we reached the Prime Minister's residence at 6 o'clock. Sri Shastri, Patnaik and myself went in. The Prime Minister was still sleeping. We managed to wake him up and told him about the announcement. The Prime Minister's immediate reaction was as follows: "I knew this. This had to happen. This was bound

to happen. How could the Chinese come any further? They had already come too far. Our army was unnecessarily alarmed. The Chinese, now that they are at the end of their supply routes, want to get a diplomatic victory over us. They may try to have their way but we will not give in to their demands." We sat and talked for nearly half-an-hour. The Prime Minister explained how China, whose image in the Afro-Asian world had gone down very much, was trying to repair the damage by this show of magnanimity. This might also be a feint for a further offensive. So we had to be extremely vigilant. He told Sri Shastri that the latter should in any case visit Assam to see the position there as he felt that this visit would bring a lot of cheer to the people and also help the State Government to tide over many of the difficulties. He told Bijoy Patnaik that he should also go and help Shastriji in restoring the law and order position and he felt that Bijoy Patnaik's presence with Sri Shastri would not only be helpful but would prove how people of another State, not at all endangered by the Chinese, felt about the affair and demonstrate to Assam the solidarity of other States with it in its moment of distress. Then he turned to me and enquired whether I was also going and I replied in the affirmative. He agreed and suggested that all the schemes that I had planned should be implemented because one could never be certain about Chinese motives and actions.

We left Palam at 8 a.m. in the morning and we were at Gauhati at about 11 o'clock. Assam was in turmoil. The airport, the roads, the railway station were congested beyond all limits and still more people were coming in. Though the whole of Assam had learnt with a sigh of relief in the morning about the Chinese offer of cease-fire, yet there was a great deal of anxiety all round because no one was prepared to accept any Chinese assurance at its face value and moreover the cease-fire was conditional on the "Indians behaving themselves". So at any moment, on one plea or another, the Chinese could resume the offensive. The cease-fire also could be for the purpose of giving the Chinese a breather to enable them to overcome the difficulties caused by the long lines of communication. The retreating army, the

Border Roads Organisation, the police and the civilian population were still flocking into Gauhati and Nowgong from North Assam and this gave rise to serious problems of supply, shelter, transport, etc. All the railway yards east of Siliguri were blocked by military traffic and railway movements had literally come to a standstill. As Pakistan had stopped the river traffic through East Pakistan, the entire requirements of Assam had to come over one single-track meter-gauge line from Katihar to Baminigaon where the great river had to be crossed by ferries. So there was a bottleneck everywhere.

When I met the Inspector General of Police, I learnt that the entire civil police, excepting the Superintendent and the Deputy Inspector General, had been withdrawn from Tezpur. I was very angry and I told him that this was the first time I had heard of civil police withdrawing from an area overrun by the enemy leaving the civilian population at the mercy of criminals and *goondas*. I asked him why he had taken this step. He said that he had done it under government orders. When we came to the Gauhati Circuit House we found that the Assam Cabinet was in session. So I walked in and enquired from the Chief Minister why the civil police had been withdrawn from Tezpur. This was an unprecedented step which had never been taken anywhere else in the world during the occupation by the enemy of any territory. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed (Finance Minister) then showed me the letter which had come the previous day by hand of the Director General of Civil Defence containing the orders of the Home Ministry that the civil administration should be withdrawn from the areas threatened by the Chinese. Chaliha (Chief Minister) enquired from me if I agreed with this order. I said that my personal views were different, but as the Central Government had issued that order, they must have done so after due deliberation and so I accepted that as the correct order.

Now there was a history behind the issue of this order. This subject had been earlier discussed at a meeting of the Cabinet Secretary's Committee, of which I was also a member and the decision taken was that there should be no withdrawal of

civilian personnel from areas threatened by the enemy. The Home Ministry was asked to put up a paper to the Cabinet and get orders to that effect. As the subject had not been discussed in any later meetings, I was under the impression that the old decision stood. It was on that understanding that we had not allowed our Intelligence Staff to withdraw. So I was surprised to see this order which was quite contrary to the decision taken at the Cabinet Secretaries' meeting. As the letter bore the signature of L. P. Singh, I went to him and enquired how this change had taken place without my knowledge and learnt from him that the original recommendation of the Secretaries had been approved by the Cabinet but, before the orders could be issued, the Governor of Assam, who had come to Delhi for consultations, had protested against the order and had seen the Ministers and got the order changed. By mistake apparently a copy of the new order had not been sent to the IB.

The whole day Sri Shastri was busy and we were busy along with him discussing the position with the Assam Government, getting acquainted with their innumerable and almost insoluble problems and trying to sort things out. At my instance a decision was also taken immediately to send back the civil police to Tezpur and Imdad Ali, the Inspector General of Police, worked hard and despatched his armed police that very evening. Their arrival at Tezpur that night restored a lot of confidence amongst the public. Bijoy Patnaik agreed to find accommodation in Orissa jails for prisoners undergoing sentences in Assam. Next L. P. Singh and I were given the task of sorting out the congestion at the railway yards because without this no supplies could come to Assam. We met the senior railway staff and they said that all yards had been blocked by goods trains carrying military supplies and, unless the army was employed to unload the wagons quickly, there was no chance of any train moving at all either east or west-ward. We then called on the local Army Commander and he immediately agreed to assist and he pressed in whatever staff he had to unload the wagons and some movement started from the next day. We went and visited refugee centres where people from NEFA and North Assam plains

were sheltered and arranged for their comforts. In the intervals I talked to my staff about the plan of raising a resistance force in South Assam and fixing the various places where the different units of the armed police could be stationed and training of the people could be started. We also discussed about the communication links, the underground headquarters at Golaghat, the rear headquarters at Haflong with advance operation centres in the jungles south of Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Nowgong. To start with, we also fixed sites for supply depots in the jungles near Kumbhirgram airfield, about 12 miles from Silchar. When I found the Chief Minister alone I talked to him and he readily responded and promised every kind of support. He also called Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed who was also enthusiastic about this plan. I must acknowledge that thereafter Chief Minister Chaliha continued to support this movement without any mental reservation and encouraged it and facilitated its growth in every way possible. Shastriji also held a public meeting and he talked to a large number of Congress workers and leaders of other political parties. But there was unanimous complaint by all people against the Government of India for having planned to desert Assam and throw it in the dragon's lap and that it was not the Government of India's determination to defend Assam but ultimately the Chinese decision to halt the advance which had saved the State.

I was anxious about Smt. Indira Gandhi's safety during her visit to Tezpur but at Gauhati I managed to get information from our Tezpur staff that she had arrived and was staying in in the Circuit House and necessary security arrangements had been made for her. She had also visited several *mahallas* in the town and also rural areas and her visit had been a great morale-booster for the people. She was brave. She had planned this visit on the 20th when, according to the army estimates, the Chinese were only about 20 or 30 miles from Tezpur and were expected to reach the town before dawn and there was no inkling at the time that the Chinese would give a call for a cease-fire that night. Yet she was ready to brave the hazards of an unprotected town, deserted by the troops, the police and the civil

administration and which might even have been occupied by the enemy.

We retired to our beds late at night to get a couple of hours' rest before starting our rounds the next day.

On the morning of the 22nd we left Gauhati and came to Tezpur. Here we heard that Smt. Indira Gandhi had been deeply moved by the hapless condition in which the people had been left by the civil administration and she had gone back to Delhi that morning to protest to the Prime Minister against allowing the civil administration to withdraw. According to her if this order was not countermanded it would be impossible to heal the wounds that had been inflicted in the people's minds by the sudden and ignoble desertion of their protectors. She was due to come back again the next day to resume her tour. We halted at Tezpur for four hours and I took the opportunity to visit the Intelligence Office and moved round the town. I found that the people were generally calm and some police had started taking positions on the roads. But shops were still closed and few commodities were available. I was told that most of the criminals, who had been let loose on the 20th, had come back. There were two villages near Tezpur town where Pakistani sympathisers had raised the cry of "*Pakistan Zindabad*" when they had heard of the withdrawal of civilian administration and they had looted some houses and shops.

At the airport there were loud complaints by the representatives of the people belonging to many parties and various organisations against the Government decision to withdraw the civil administration. Indeed, at one stage the Chief Minister was so angry that he asked for the withdrawal of all Central Officers saying that he would manage the work on his own unaided by any Officers of the Government of India. He demanded the immediate rescinding of the order of withdrawal of civilian staff so that a similar situation might not develop again in future.

During our talks with the Corps Commander, he gave a very bleak picture. He said that the Indian Army had been thoroughly defeated and was incapable of making any stand not only in North Assam but anywhere in Assam at all. He again

mentioned the absolute need of getting foreign assistance without which the Chinese advance could not be stopped. He had no plans at that time to deploy the 27 Division all of which, minus the heavy equipment, had by then arrived at Tezpur. He, however, agreed to get back his Corps Headquarters from Gauhati. He was in a hurry to go to Missamari in search of his missing General.

At 1 p.m. we left Tezpur airport and reached Lila Bari in North Lakhimpur. Shastriji held a public meeting near the airfield and I took the opportunity to visit the town. I met a lot of the retreating army as well as the Border Roads Organisation people who were coming from Siang Division. I also met a large number of tribal refugees. There was anxious speculation among them about the next Chinese move. At 5 p.m. we reached Dibrugarh and went to the Circuit House. There was not much panic in this important town which was south of the Brahmaputra, because the effects of withdrawal from Tezpur had not been felt in Dibrugarh at all. Shastriji talked to a large number of local Congress workers and advised them to keep the morale of the people high even in adversity. We then reached Jorhat at 6 p.m. and from the airport we went to the IAF mess, where there were further discussions. Here I found that the first unit of the armed police, that I had sent for on November 20, had already arrived and the Air Force had completed the lifting of 3 companies, each of two armed police battalions, with all the personal equipment. This was a creditable performance. The heavier equipment of the battalions like transport had, however, to come by rail. With the state of traffic congestion on the railway, it might take a month or even more for all this stuff to arrive. So I arranged with the Inspector General and the Superintendent of Police to provide the essential transport to these battalions so that they could be made mobile. I met the two Battalion Commanders and talked to them about the importance of the work they had come for and told them that they should keep in constant touch with the Deputy Director, IB (Bisht) and promised that I would return in a week's time to take up the work in proper earnest on the ground. We returned to Gauhati at 8-30 p.m. There Sri Shastri had a final round of

discussions with the Governor and the Assam Ministers. I left final instructions with our staff for setting up our communication centres immediately and deploying the armed police to get acquainted with the geography of the area where they were to work.

We left Gauhati at 11-30 p.m. and took on board the families of several serving officers who wanted to evacuate to Calcutta as Assam had been declared a non-family area. So instead of flying straight back to Delhi, we first flew to Calcutta, where we reached at 1-30 a.m. on the 23rd and, after discharging these passengers there, finally reached Delhi at 5 a.m. in the morning. During this journey, Bijoy Patnaik and I sat up for most of the night with my maps and the plans which I had worked out during the discussions with my officers at Gauhati on the 21st and the 22nd and, with my knowledge of the area between Silchar and Jorhat, finalised our tentative scheme in case the resistance movement had to be built up there because of Chinese resumption of aggression. Otherwise, we decided to keep this work in South Assam in abeyance and take up the work in right earnest north of Brahmaputra in areas like Darrang, North Kamrup, Dhubri and North Lakhimpur and also in NEFA. We decided that the armed police battalions coming to Assam would continue to do so and this movement would not be stopped. (Incidentally, the major part of these eight battalions moved to Assam during this emergency was still deployed there as late as 1968.) As events turned out, we did not have to organise the resistance movement in South Assam except in South Lakhimpur and Goalpara Sub-divisions but a very strong organisation was set up in North Assam and NEFA. As an emblem of our first effort of organising resistance in South Assam, Haflong became the most important training centre in Eastern India for the resistance movement.

On the 23rd when I met the Prime Minister he said that the Home Minister had already met him and he was going to meet Patnaik later. I gave him my own version also. He enquired from me what plans I had prepared for starting the resistance movement in Assam. I explained my plans to him with the help

of a map and he approved of them. He said that as we would have to live with the Chinese menace for a long time in future, the civil resistance movement should also be of a permanent nature. Such a voluntary organisation would not only be indispensable in times of war but it would be very useful even in time of peace. He enquired if Patnaik had been helpful and was happy to hear that he was and said that he was going to appoint Patnaik as an adviser on civilian resistance. This was the origin of a tremendous movement which was started under Pandit Nehru's personal guidance to organise civilian resistance in depth in all the districts and divisions of our northern frontier regions. The Prime Minister then asked me why the order regarding the evacuation of the civilian population had been issued and I told him that in the Secretaries' meeting it had been decided that there should be no withdrawal of civil administration, but I was told that subsequently, at the intervention of the Governor of Assam, the Cabinet had decided otherwise and hence the orders had been issued. The Prime Minister, however, said that he was not aware of any Cabinet decision to the effect. I replied that such an important order could not have been issued without a proper Cabinet decision and it was possible that, as the Prime Minister had to attend to so many things during those days and was under continuous pressure, probably this might have escaped his notice. He did not admit this but said that the possibility was that towards the end of some Cabinet meeting this matter might have been casually mentioned and then orders issued as if a formal decision had been taken. He told me that Indira Gandhi had returned to Delhi to protest against this order and had apprised him of the adverse effect it had produced amongst the civilian population and he asked me to take this matter up again at the Secretaries' meeting to have the order changed. I reported this to the Cabinet Secretary and also to the Home Minister and ultimately after much discussion this order was changed.

An order withdrawing civil administration from an area, likely to be occupied by the enemy, should not be issued and the civil administration should not be withdrawn. It is in the conditions

of enemy occupation that people require greater sympathy and assistance. Withdrawing of the civil administration would mean the Government leaving the civilian population to the wolves. How can that Government get any support from the people later? Nothing can produce worse demoralisation than this step. People feel that they have been betrayed. In peace time, the administrators posed as friends and protectors but, as soon as there was sign of danger, they ran away. How could such officers regain the trust and confidence of the people? It was not so much the fear of Chinese occupation as the immediate and fearful sight of the entire army and the civilian administration withdrawing which had really unnerved the people of Tezpur.

But a condition has first to be created in which the civilian staff can remain behind and be helpful to the people. Otherwise, under enemy occupation the civilian staff might just be shot against the tree, taken prisoners and kept in chains, publicly humiliated and rendered ineffective, or they might turn into collaborators and carry out the enemy orders to save their skin. If these were the only alternatives, then there was no point in leaving the civil administration behind. But it is possible to create conditions amongst the people in which the civilian officers can stay securely with the assistance of the people and guide their resistance movement and thus be a source of inspiration and strength to them. But this condition had not been created when the 1962 debacle took place in NEFA and North Assam and so the order that was issued withdrawing the civilian personnel could be justified as there was no other alternative even though it caused such great demoralisation amongst the people and resentment against the Government. However, this must be prevented in future and the resistance movement, which has been organised in the northern frontier regions under the Prime Minister's guidance, would make such withdrawals unnecessary.

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J. K. Galbraith, in his book *Ambassador's Journal*, has implied that during the Chinese aggression on India in October-November, 1962, Pandit Nehru was in jitters and the whole Indian

Cabinet was without any clue and had practically disintegrated. This unfortunately is a very distorted picture of the scene at the Cabinet level and particularly about Prime Minister Nehru in those crucial days from so distinguished a person as Galbraith. I used to meet Pandit Nehru every day during that period and on some days more than once and I found that throughout the period he maintained his calm and resilience. Not only he, but other members of his cabinet with whom I had also a great deal to do those days, i.e. Morarji Desai, T.T. Krishnamachari and Lal Bahadur Shastri, also maintained their calm. The President, Dr. Radhakrishnan, remained a source of inspiration to everybody.

What certainly had hurt Pandit Nehru most was the failure of the Army in the Kameng Division of NEFA. He knew that this defeat was due not as much to the shortage of equipment as to the lack of proper attitude and of leadership. But he did not criticise any individual. He did not try to find a scape-goat. As the Prime Minister, he took on himself the full responsibility for the humiliation that India had suffered but in this also he saw a silver lining which had escaped the eyes of others including even friendly foreigners like Galbraith. Pandit Nehru saw in this crisis the old serene face of India which never lost its balance even in times of great emergency and he saw India unite in a way it had done never before in the past. He was also happy that the normal complacent attitude of the Indian had given way to a new attitude of determination and defiance.

Pandit Nehru presided over all Cabinet and Defence meetings. He had numerous discussions with Secretaries, particularly the Secretary General, M.J. Desai. Whenever I approached him, I could get a straight decision from him. When he placed me in charge of some irregular forces, I suggested to him that I would have to turn to some foreign countries for some preliminary training and essential equipment, and he readily agreed. He had confidence that this would not in any way affect my independence of action and that I would not allow anything to happen which might jeopardise our interests.

Galbraith, of course, had reason for displeasure because Pandit Nehru could not be pressurised, and this comes out prominently

as one goes through the pages of this remarkable *Journal*. Unfortunately, even when India was in distress and required some urgent aid in the form of arms, the aid, meagre though it was, was conditional, not in so many words but implied, on India's making up her differences with Pakistan on Kashmir, as if the differences were of India's making and as if it was India which was the guilty party in this dispute. Even though the Ambassador has tried to slur over it and shift the blame chiefly to Sandys, the British Foreign Secretary, the fact is quite clear that though the Chinese were then advancing into Indian soil, Great Britain and the USA, instead of immediately coming to India's assistance unreservedly, tried to impose conditions which could only result in India having to give up a larger chunk of valuable territory to Pakistan than was likely to go to China even if no foreign aid came. But they soon found out that Pandit Nehru was not susceptible to their pressure. And the more pressure they tried to bring to bear on Nehru, the more defiant he became. They tried to play on Nehru's fears, but they did not realise that Nehru did not lose his nerve. He lost his temper and they got a taste of that. Even Morarji Desai told them bluntly that if they tried to hedge their aid with conditions, they could take it back and India would do without it.

Another person who showed remarkable courage was Indira Gandhi. She was not holding any official position except as a member of the Congress Working Committee. I have mentioned how on November 21 when the Chinese were expected to reach Tezpur and there was no inkling of the cease-fire, she planned to visit that town and spend a whole day and night there. Nothing could swerve her from this mission. She gave a call for the raising of the Citizen's Council which took up a lot of work for the troops and toured the length and breadth of India to rouse the people.

And throughout this period, Parliament functioned proving the maturity of the democracy under Pandit Nehru.

But Pandit Nehru has been criticised by many people, foreigners as well as Indians, because he asked for and accepted military aid although he was averse to the idea of a military alliance. Pandit Nehru himself has explained this action by saying that

when India was in difficulties, she asked for some military aid from whatever quarters she could get. Asking for aid in a particular circumstance did not in any way amount to breaking the pledge of nonalignment. Also, asking for military aid in a given circumstance did not amount to forming a military alliance. No doubt the western countries would have liked India to join a military alliance and much of the criticism of double standards against Nehru was levelled because he would not agree to it. It may be mentioned that when placed in similar circumstances created by the invasion of her territory by Germany, Soviet Russia had accepted generous military aid from her arch-enemy the United States of America even before that country had joined the war. Similarly, Mao Tse-tung also had had no difficulty with his conscience in accepting aid from the USA against Japan. This was a temporary phase and, as soon as the war ended, the giving and taking of the aid stopped and the old attitudes reappeared. Pandit Nehru's attitude in this respect was unexceptionable. He needed some armaments and he took them from whatever quarters he could get them. Adversity brings even enemies together, e.g. America and Russia versus Germany; but in this case India was not an enemy of either Great Britain or the USA nor the vice versa. So, there was no question of double standards in taking aid.

In the matter of taking aid and not joining an alliance, Nehru's thinking was clear. There was a short-term and a long-term problem, and the long-term problem was the more serious. The short-term problem was to tide over the present difficulty. But this must not be allowed to jeopardise the solution of the long-term problem. As Pandit Nehru had earlier explained to us, in a conflict between India and China, the United States could help India by giving some planes and some arms, i.e. helping India to prosecute the war. But it could not prevent the war from breaking out. On the other hand, Russia could do it. If India took any such action which showed that she was inclining towards the United States, Russia then might come closer to China instead of drifting away which she had been doing since 1960. It would have been against India's security

interests if that process was halted or reversed.

Also Nehru knew that it would be impossible for the Chinese to carry the war to the plains of India. Logistics would fail them and he knew that the fighting would, more or less, be confined to the heights and to the hills and the jungles. Even in case of a military alliance, no foreign troops were going to come and fight India's battle in these frontier regions. In these forbidding heights, they certainly were not more experienced than the Indian troops. So the utmost assistance that we could get would be in the form of some equipment. Which country would like to mortgage its independence for that ! It might have been different if the Chinese were in a position to come down to the Gangetic and Brahmaputra plains. I am sure Pandit Nehru, the pragmatist, would have, in such circumstances, even gone in for military alliance just as Russia had done when attacked by Germany.

25 Colombo Proposals

IT IS NOT necessary to go into the details of the terms of the cease-fire unilaterally declared by the Chinese except the following salient points :

(1) Beginning from the midnight of November 21-22, 1962, the Chinese Frontier Guards would cease fire along the entire border.

(2) The Chinese would begin a withdrawal from December 1, 1962, and they would withdraw to positions 20 kilometres behind the line of actual control which existed between China and India on November 7, 1959. (The Chinese would thus completely evacuate NEFA and hold positions north of the McMahon Line.)

(3) In the middle and the western sectors the Chinese Frontier Guards would withdraw 20 kilometres from the line of actual control (which would more or less mean 20 kilometres from their claimed line of 1960. But they would evacuate Demchok, Rezang La, etc.)

(4) Inside the area in their side of actual control but to be vacated by them, the Chinese would set up checkposts with civil police and notify their existence to the Government of India.

(5) The Chinese and Indian Governments should appoint officials to meet at places agreed upon by both the parties to discuss matters relating to the 20 kilometres withdrawal of the armed forces of each party to form a demilitarised zone and the establishment of checkposts by each party on its side of the line of actual control as well as the return of the captured personnel.

(6) When the tasks of these officials had yielded results and

the results had been put into effect, talks could be held between the Prime Ministers of the two countries either in China or in India.

(7) Even in the absence of response from the Indian Government in good time, the Chinese Government would take initiative to carry out the above-mentioned measures.

This proposal would leave the Chinese in complete control of the entire north-east portion of Ladakh known as Aksai Chin, Soda Plains, Lingzi Tang and Depsang Plains, but they would be completely out of the NEFA and also the territory they had occupied in south-east Ladakh. In the middle sector there would be no change as there had been no Chinese intrusion. It was quite clear that the Chinese were not in any way disposed to give up the territory of north-east Ladakh, which they had grabbed by force.

But Prime Minister Nehru did not respond. Neither did the Indian Government appoint officials to work out the details of the withdrawal or the release of the captured personnel, (there were only Indian prisoners of war and no Chinese) nor did the Prime Minister respond to the call for a meeting between the two Prime Ministers. Instead Pandit Nehru demanded that the Chinese should go back to the positions which they had held before September 8, 1962, when the first trespass by the Chinese into Dhola sector had taken place. The Prime Minister was unwilling to discuss cease-fire or withdrawal or peace or further settlement of the border question unless the aggression was first vacated.

Why did China attack India in such a brazen-faced way without the slightest justification and, after making quite significant gains, why did she suddenly call off the fight and withdraw her army? The Chinese mind is always a puzzle and, in trying to fathom the working of Mao Tse-tung's mind, one comes across too many imponderables. However, in every thing that Mao Tse-tung does there is a purpose and a method, and, whilst keeping the main aim always before him, he often makes compromises in the details to prepare conditions for the next step forward.

Mao Tse-tung's strategy of conducting war was: attacking and then withdrawing; then attacking, withdrawing again; and not holding on always to the territory gained. He aimed at the destruction of the enemy and not winning territory alone. He says, "People may ask if there is not a contradiction to abandon a territory gained by heroic battle. Does it not mean that the heroic fighters shed their blood in vain and to no purpose? This is to put the wrong question. Does one eat to no purpose simply because he relieves himself later? Does one sleep in vain because one wakes up and goes about? I do not think the questions should be asked thus; rather one should keep on eating or sleeping or fighting. These are illusions born out of subjectivism and formalism and do not exist in real life." This is not a new philosophy and Pandit Nehru had earlier quoted from *Mudrārākshasa* to stress that one must not lose one's objective in war. If that came about, then the purpose of the war, whether a victory was won or not, might be completely lost.

What then was the purpose of the Chinese attack in October and November, 1962, and then the withdrawal? In his briefing to us early in 1963, Pandit Nehru analysed this as follows :

> "It was wrong to assume that the Chinese undertook this aggression only because they wanted some patches of territory, however important that territory might be. The real cause was something else. That something was the basic eternal conflict between China and India. The two civilisations had fought each other over centuries and none had so far been able to overcome the other. China did not want any country near her which was not prepared to accept her leadership or direction; but because India would not accept that leadership, so India had to be humiliated. Though India would not interfere with what was happening within China, yet she came in China's way by the mere fact of her separate political structure and pursuing a separate policy which was succeeding. It was a challenge to China and it created an impression in the countries roundabout, which was adverse to China. This was the basic cause of the conflict. So it

became necessary for China to remove this obstruction—remove in the psychological sense—to show to other countries that though India might be very big on the map, yet India was no match against China."

Pandit Nehru proceeded to say :

"China in the past had added vast territories to her empire and her maps still showed that she included portions or the whole of many present-day independent countries to be within that empire. She was not expecting to regain all that territory immediately and she was quite willing to wait, but nothing could swerve her from her final aim. China also felt that even apart from outright conquest, she could not just now even aspire for overlordship; but she wanted to be treated as an elder brother—and in the Chinese society the elder brother was very important—and as China could not force the elder-brother theory on India, hence Indian influence had to be removed or liquidated. So by humiliating India, China warned the other countries that they should not also misbehave."

It is not that Pandit Nehru became aware of this theory only after the Chinese attack. In fact, he had mentioned the same apprehensions in several of his earlier briefings to us. He had apprehended this even as early as 1952. And this thought had ever been present in his mind. But he also knew that the consequences of a war could be serious for India economically and otherwise and so he had tried his best to hold China on to a path of non-aggression; but he was not willing to compromise on the question of his frontiers and he would not succumb to Chinese pressures and threats. In fact, the more the Chinese showed their hostility, the more defiant Pandit Nehru became and not even the debacle of October/November, 1962, could lower his morale or weaken his determination.

At he same time Pandit Nehru appreciated the way the Chinese army had carried out the operations and said:

"In October/November, 1962 in the fighting in the Himalayas, the Chinese had done well in the military sense. Their training was good and their leadership and tactics were all good and brilliant. Of course, the Chinese army had been trained in mountain warfare by long years of fighting and it was also a very big army. Though it was not so well equipped as compared to Western armies, yet it was a very big army and it was backed by a vast country with its considerable resources. But China could never beat India in the way that the Allies beat Germany or Japan during the last war. Nor could India hope to beat China in the same way. Logistics would come in the way. The Chinese could no doubt defeat Indian armed contingents at the frontier just as with proper training, equipment and leadership Indian armed contingents could also inflict defeats on the Chinese army in battles at the same places. But neither China could carry through the war into the plains of India, nor could India carry the war through Tibet into China. Geography and the difficulties of logistics come in the way". (This view had also been expressed by Field Marshal Ayub, who had discounted the possibility of a large Chinese army coming through the Himalayan passes to infest the Indian plains.)

Therefore, the cessation of hostilities in the winter of 1962-63 was no doubt due to the failure of logistics. The Chinese had, of course, done well; but so far as NEFA was concerned, from the end of December till the beginning of May, the Himalayan passes would be closed to all forms of traffic and the Chinese army south of the Himalayas would be left to fend for itself. Only a small part of the Indian army had been deployed against the Chinese either in NEFA or in Ladakh, and the rest was intact. When the weather would be such as to prevent the Chinese from bringing any form of sustenance to their troops south of the Himalayas, it would be the ideal weather for the Indian army to attack and take account of the Chinese army. In fact, the Indian army was already collecting at Tezpur for this very purpose. So why wait for forcible e viction from the ill-gotten territory, which was

sure to follow? It was far better to call a cease-fire, withdraw and leave the territory free with a great show of magnanimity. This would not only humiliate India further but would also establish China's bonafides in the world as a peace-loving nation. Thus countries, particularly the newly independent countries, would be frightened of China's great power and at the same time would be convinced that China could be friendly and meant no harm to them. In fact, this was the effect it did produce temporarily in a very large number of countries in Asia and Africa, causing a good deal of embarrassment to India and other nonaligned countries. Referring to this Pandit Nehru said, "It was evident that some of the Colombo Power countries had been influenced greatly by China, not so much ideologically influenced, but due to fear of a great neighbour whose will they must not counter or oppose. Otherwise, there would be trouble for them".

Pandit Nehru listed another cause. China had hoped that following the attack, India would disrupt and break up in various parts. This had happened to many other countries in the past, but in this the Chinese were completely disillusioned. They had no doubt counted on the ability of their sympathisers and fellow travellers in India to create conditions which would not only uphold the Chinese attack as fully justified but also force the Government of India to accept the Chinese demands and go with folded hands to seek peace. In fact, a few months before October, 1962, the Chinese had given the line of action to their sympathisers in India by holding up the example of the Chinese Communist Party which had supported the Russians in the mid-twenties when the latter had attacked and ousted the Nationalist Chinese from the Manchurian railway. This had been cited as an example of international proletarian solidarity and was clearly intended to serve as the guideline to their supporters in India when faced with a similar situation. But much to their dismay, the Chinese found that the Indian people as a whole forgot all their differences, political, regional and otherwise, and, instead of disrupting, united as they had done never before, in the face of this danger. Pandit Nehru told us that as the Chinese could not bring about any disruption in India, which they had expected

to follow their attack, so one of their main objectives was not gained. This unity was exhibited in the resolution which the Lok Sabha passed on November 14 whilst the Chinese were still advancing in NEFA. It said, "With hope and faith this House affirms the firm resolve of the Indian people to drive out the aggressor from the sacred soil of India however long and hard the struggle may be." The Communist Members also voted in support of this resolution. Whilst speaking on this resolution Pandit Nehru made this remarkable statement :

> "I have almost felt that it would have been suitable to add a small paragraph to the resolution thanking the Chinese Government for taking this action against us which has suddenly lifted a veil from the face of India. During the last three weeks, we have had a glimpse of the strong and serene face of India, strong and yet calm and determined, that ancient face that is ever young and vibrant. This has been an experience worth having for all of us and it has been our high privilege to share in that emotion and experience. Any person who gives thought to these matters will realise and I hope other countries, especially the Chinese Government, would realise—what this signifies."

Another factor which must have discouraged the Chinese was the Russian attitude of non-approval of their aggression. It was true that the Russians themselves were at that time hardpressed by the USA in Cuba and other places and so they were not yet willing to throw away the advantages of a military alliance with China, which safeguarded their vast eastern frontier; but the Russians at the same time did not want the world to be embroiled in another war from the brink of which they had just withdrawn in Cuba and see a friendly country like India, which had been a consistent supporter of the socialist cause throughout the post-war period, humiliated so blatantly and unjustly. This disapproval by Russia of the Chinese action, whilst stressing the value of her friendship with both China and India, must have also jerked the Chinese to a state of proper realisation of the deep impression

which Pandit Nehru's policy of nonalignment had made in the citadel of socialism. Indeed, Pandit Nehru referring to this said, "China has now gone all out attacking the Soviet Union and one of the main causes of this attack was that the Soviet Union had not been a partisan in favour of China in the Sino-Indian conflict." Apart from this, Pandit Nehru also felt that the national interests of the Russians and the Chinese were coming into conflict with each other. And referring to the Chinese articles which had been published in January, 1963, which practically demanded the surrender of the Soviet Communist Party to the Chinese, he said, "As the Soviet Communist Party was not going to accept these demands, so this conflict would continue. One should not confuse these conflicts with ideological differences. The ideological differences were small but they became big issues only when they were utilised for covering up big national differences. So what was visible then was a basic conflict between the national interests of China and the Soviet Union and the trend of events showed that this conflict was bound to get accentuated between the two countries." How prophetic this statement was! Within a couple of years the so-called revisionist, renegade Russia became the number-one enemy of Communist China pushing even imperialist America to the second position with reactionary India coming a close third.

And lastly, the fact that America, Great Britain, Australia and many other countries readily responded to India's call for assistance must have served as an eye-opener to China. She had dealt two severe blows on India in October and November, 1962 before this help really could take shape and could produce any effect. But in the plains of India and in the foothills that would soon turn the balance. There was also every danger of the American Air Force being deployed for the defence of India and such strikes might not be confined to operations from Indian soil alone but might be delivered from Taiwan or Okinawa and from other bases as well. China was in no position to defend her military establishments in Tibet or even in China from massive American air attacks. Moreover, if the Americans joined the Indians in the war in the south, it was almost certain that Taiwan would

join from the east; and, in its appreciation made in 1961, the Chinese Foreign Office had come to the conclusion that in case of simultaneous attacks by Taiwan in the east, India in the south and Americans from their Pacific bases, China would be placed in a critical position. Therefore, a prolonged war could be of serious disadvantage to her. Hence, China wisely desisted from indulging in further adventures on Indian soil and decided to pull out while the passes were still open.

At the same time, China had hoped that as India had been taught a severe lesson, she would now quietly come to the negotiating table to settle the dispute on terms dictated by her. These terms would no doubt include acceptance of the whole of north-east Ladakh up to the claimed Chinese line to be part of traditional Chinese territory and also fairly large patches of territory south of the McMahon Line in NEFA, though not the whole of NEFA, as parts of China. Big salients in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh also south of the Himalayas had to be recognised as parts of Chinese territory. If these terms could be forced on defeated India at the point of the bayonet, the entire defence of the plains of India would be thrown open to the mercy of the Chinese. However, Pandit Nehru did not oblige them. He did not accept the cease-fire terms, though, of course, he could not prevent the Chinese from withdrawing from Indian territory. He did not send any team of officials to settle the terms of withdrawal or the future of the border unless the Chinese withdrew to the lines held by them prior to September 8, 1962. There was, therefore, no question of Pandit Nehru visiting Peking or inviting Chou En-lai to Delhi.

Whilst they were in occupation of parts of NEFA, the Chinese did their best to subvert the local population by denigrating the Indian Government, the Indian Army and the Indian civilian administration at every step and impressing the people with the alleged superiority of the Chinese in every sphere and also the superiority of the thought of Mao Tse-tung over Pandit Nehru's philosophy of socialism and humanism. They offered to work for the villagers in the field to collect their harvest, tend their cattle and help in repairing their houses. They issued arms captured

from the Indian troops freely amongst the tribals, obviously to prepare them against the Indian administration for a future contingency. Except in a few cases where some persons were punished for having helped the Indians, the Chinese did not harass the NEFA population in any way. They did not buy anything from the villagers and depended on their own supplies or those captured from the Indian Army. They did not use the tribals as porters, a job which was always irritating to the latter. They encouraged the tribals to search out any Indian troops hiding in hills and jungles. They carried on ceaseless propaganda telling the people that the territory captured by them was theirs and not only that but up to the foothills, and that though they had offered a cease-fire and would withdraw for the time being, they would come back soon and annex this territory to their motherland China. They propagated that the Indians were racially quite different from the NEFA tribals who were really an offshoot of the great Han race and that whilst the Indians treated them as inferiors, the Hans would accept them with open arms as their long-lost brethren. However, the NEFA tribals generally remained aloof because they were clever enough to understand that all this propaganda was being done against the Government of India to tempt the tribals to opt for incorporating their homeland with China; and they had seen with their own eyes the terrible state to which the Chinese had reduced the Tibetans, whose territory they had occupied on the same plea of Tibet being a part of the great Chinese mainland.

The Chinese started their withdrawal not on December 1 as they had announced but much later and moved at a snail's pace and did not cross the passes till towards the end of January taking over a month to traverse the area which they had covered in three days in their forward march. The explanation of this slow and delayed withdrawal given by the Chinese to their sympathisers was that they were watching the rate of flow of foreign military aid to India and assessing whether the Indian Government, strengthened by this foreign assistance, would be emboldened to strike back at their retreating army. The Chinese left in junk heaps most of the Indian arms which they had captured and for

which they had no use. After rendering them ineffective, they asked India with a show of generosity to send officials to take over these arms. They, however, took away all vehicles, pump sets, hospital equipment, power units and even the helicopter which had crashed at Lumpu.

The Chinese did not allow the International Red Cross to visit Indian prisoners and thus violated the Geneva Convention. But the Indian Government allowed the Red Cross to visit Chinese civilian prisoners at Deoli and, though the Red Cross was satisfied with the way they were being treated, the Chinese carried on propaganda of maltreatment of these prisoners and repeatedly demanded their release and repatriation. These threats, however, had no effect on the Indian Government and, even when finally released, only a small number wanted to be repatriated to China and the rest went back to their homes in different states of India and settled down in the occupations they were pursuing before their arrest.

The detention of these Chinese prisoners on security grounds, however, produced one good result. The Chinese released the Indian prisoners numbering about 3,000 by the end of April, 1963. They had done their best to brain-wash the prisoners and paraded the officer-soldier camaraderie supposedly prevailing in the Chinese army. They kept the Gurkhas isolated from the rest and made a special effort to win them over by propagating that they were not Indians and China and Nepal were good friends. But all this attempt to subvert the troops and separate the Gurkhas misfired. Again to show their friendliness, the Chinese took a batch of Indian officers on a conducted tour of China to impress them with the grand progress socialist China had made compared to poverty-stricken India.

All this time Chinese propaganda against India continued unabated—professing everlasting friendship between the Chinese and the Indian peoples, attacking the Indian Government for allegedly adopting an anti-China policy only to suppress the democratic struggles of the Indian people and asking the latter to force their Government to accept the hand of friendship which China had profferred. That all this was a ruse to deceive the

Indian people was evident from the propaganda that China was putting out among her own population regarding India. It was reliably learnt that at about this time the Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister was briefing important overseas Chinese leaders on the points to be propagated amongst members of their own community as well as among the local population. The briefing was as follows: India had been taught a good lesson. At the same time China had shown her magnanimity by withdrawing from the conquered territory. China would wait till the next summer to see what developments would occur in India and what would be the extent of foreign arms aid and then decide on the next step to take. China had no intention of recognising the McMahon Line as the frontier between India and China in the Eastern Sector but China had not quite made up her mind regarding the frontier she would ultimately decide on. Pandit Nehru's intransigence was due to his dependence on the bourgeoisie and the feudal elements in India and the imperialists abroad and he was raising the China bogey only to stabilise his own position in India, which was under pressure from the left.

In actual fact, China adopted a most aggressive posture again in July, 1963 and started propagating in the areas bordering NEFA that her army would again move into NEFA immediately after the monsoon. Actually, a Chinese Brigade had moved into North Burma and had taken positions to the east of the Lohit and Tirap Divisions of NEFA. But the threatened invasion did not come, because though Indian civil administration had gone back to all the original positions and so had our Intelligence units, the Indian army had not yet moved forward and, therefore, there would have been no excuse for this invasion. Probably it was just a ruse to intimidate India to force her to come to the negotiating table, a course which the Chinese Government very strongly desired and which it had put down as one of the cardinal points of its foreign policy even as early as 1961.

In the meantime, the six Colombo Powers representing Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, UAR and Ghana met at Colombo between December 10 and 12, 1962 at the initiative of the Ceylonese Prime Minister, Smt. Bandarnaike, and drew up what later

became famous as the Colombo Proposals. It would be best to quote here the actual proposals and the principles underlying them and also the clarifications.

"1. The Conference considers that the existing *de facto* cease-fire period is a good starting point for a peaceful settlement of the Indian-Chinese conflict.

2. (*a*) With regard to the Western Sector, the Conference would like to make an appeal to the Chinese Government to carry out the 20 kilometres withdrawal of their military posts as has been proposed in the letter of Prime Minister Chou En-lai to Prime Minister Nehru of November 21 and November 28, 1962.

(*b*) The Conference would make an appeal to the Indian Government to keep their existing military position.

(*c*) Pending a final solution of the border dispute, the area vacated by the Chinese military withdrawals will be a demilitarised zone to be administered by civilian posts of both sides to be agreed upon, without prejudice to the rights of the previous presence of both India and China in that area.

3. With regard to the Eastern Sector, the Conference considers that the line of actual control in the areas recognised by both the Governments could serve as a cease-fire line to their respective positions. Remaining areas in this sector can be settled in their future discussions.

4. With regard to the problems of the Middle Sector, the Conference suggests that they will be solved by peaceful means, without resorting to force.

5. The Conference believes that these proposals, which could help in consolidating the cease-fire, once implemented, should pave the way of discussions between representatives of both parties for the purpose of solving problems entailed in the cease-fire position.

6. The Conference would like to make it clear that a positive response for the proposed appeal will not prejudice the position of either of the two Governments as regards its conception of the final alignment of the boundaries.

The Principles Underlying the Proposals of the Six

1. The Sino-Indian boundary dispute must be settled by peaceful negotiations between China and India. The object of the Six is to create an atmosphere which would enable China and India to enter upon negotiations with dignity and self-respect.

2. The proposals of the Six are intended to create such an atmosphere.

3. In considering the proposals made by them, the Six welcomed the announcement of a unilateral cease-fire and withdrawal made by China on November 21, 1962.

4. In the formulation of these proposals, the Six paid particular attention to the following principles:

(*a*) neither side should be in a position to derive benefit from military operations;

(*b*) a stable cease-fire must precede any attempt at negotiations between China and India;

(*c*) any cease-fire arrangements must be without prejudice to the boundary claims of either party ;

(*d*) in the establishment of a stable cease-fire, neither side should be requested to withdraw from territory which is admittedly theirs, or from territory over which they exercised exclusive civilian administration ;

(*e*) the establishment of a stable cease-fire may or may not, according to circumstances, require the establishment of a demilitarised zone.

5. On a consideration of these principles, the Six were of the view that it was not feasible to formulate one uniform proposal to apply to all Sectors of the Sino-Indian boundary now in dispute.

6. On the Eastern Sector:

(*a*) it seems to be clear that, whether the McMahon Line is considered to be an illegal imposition or not, it has in fact become a line of actual control, with the Chinese Government exercising exclusive administrative control to the north of it, and the Indian Government exercising exclusive administrative control to the south of it, except in Che Dong and Longju which are disputed;

(*b*) for purpose of a cease-fire, the Six considered that this line of actual control would be the most appropriate;

(*c*) if this line were to be adopted, the nature of the terrain would bring about an automatic disengagement of forces, so that the establishment of a demilitarised zone would become unnecessary;

(*d*) the Six considered that China and India should enter upon immediate negotiations in regard to the disputed portions of the Eastern Sector (i.e. Che Dong and Longju), and that it might be appropriate if arrangements similar to Longju could be made in respect of Che Dong pending a final settlement.

7. In the Middle Sector, the Six considered that, inasmuch as there had been no military operations in the sector, and inasmuch as the line of actual control was not in dispute, except at one place (Wuje or Barahoti), it would be appropriate if, pending a final settlement of overall boundary question,

(*a*) both sides desisted from military actions;

(*b*) both sides respected the *status quo*.

8. In formulating proposals for a cease-fire on the Western Sector, the Six bore in mind the following factual considerations :

(*a*) that China and India are not agreed as to what is meant by "the line of actual control as of November 7, 1959";

(*b*) that India exercised exclusive administrative control to the west of what the Chinese claim to be the traditional customary line, and, prior to 1959, may have sent out patrols to the east of that line from time to time;

(*c*) that between 1959 and 1962, India has established 43 military checkposts to the east of what the Chinese have described as the traditional customary line;

(*d*) that prior to 1959, the Chinese held somewhere to the east of the traditional customary line as claimed by them;

(*e*) that between 1959 and 1962, the Chinese also have established some military posts westward but to the east of what China claims as the traditional customary line;

(*f*) that the Chinese reached what they claimed to be the traditional customary line in 1962 as the result of their recent military actions;

(*g*) that the area to the east of what the Chinese claim as the traditional customary line is uninhabited so that civilian administrative control in the strict sense of that term would not have been possible by either side;

(*h*) that at the date of the unilateral cease-fire declared by the Chinese, the Chinese and Indian military forces were confronting each other more or less along the traditional customary line claimed by China.

9. Bearing these considerations in mind, the Six propose as a basis for a cease-fire:

(*a*) that Chinese forces should carry out the withdrawal proposed by Prime Minister Chou En-lai on November 21, 1962, on the Western Sector;

(*b*) that Indian forces should remain where they are, i.e. on the traditional customary line as claimed by China;

(*c*) that the area in between should be demilitarised pending a final settlement of the border dispute;

(*d*) that the demilitarised zone should be so administered as not to exclude the presence of either India or China as hitherto, pending a final settlement of the border dispute;

(*e*) that pending a final settlement of the border dispute, this zone should be so administered as to exclude the presence of military forces of both sides. It is therefore proposed that this zone should be administered by civilian posts to be agreed upon by both sides.

Clarification Given by the Representatives of the Colombo Powers to the Government of India on January 13, 1963

Upon request from the Government of India, the following clarifications of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of the Colombo Conference proposals were given by the delegations of Ceylon, UAR and Ghana:

Western Sector

(*i*) The withdrawal of Chinese forces proposed by the Colombo Conference will be 20 kilometres as proposed by Prime Minister Chou En-lai to Prime Minister Nehru in the statement of the

Chinese Government dated 21st November and in Prime Minister Chou En-lai's letter of 28th November, 1962, i.e. from the line of actual control between the two sides as of November 7, 1959, as defined in maps III and V circulated by the Government of China.

(*ii*) The existing military posts which the forces of the Government of India will keep to will be on and up to the line indicated in (*i*) above.

(*iii*) The demilitarised zone of 20 kilometres created by Chinese military withdrawals will be administered by civilian posts of both sides. This is a substantive part of the Colombo Conference proposals. It is as to the location, the number of posts and their composition that there has to be an agreement between the two Governments of India and China.

Eastern Sector

The Indian forces can, in accordance with the Colombo Conference proposals, move right up to the south of the line of actual control, i.e. the McMahon Line, except for the two areas on which there is difference of opinion between the Governments of India and China. The Chinese forces similarly can move right up to the north of the McMahon Line except for these two areas. The two areas, referred to as the remaining areas in the Colombo Conference proposals, arrangements in regard to which are to be settled between the Governments of India and China, according to the Colombo Conference proposals, are Che Dong or the Thagla Ridge area and the Longju area, in which cases there is a difference of opinion as to the line of actual control between the two Governments.

Middle Sector

The Colombo Conference desired that the *status quo* in this sector should be maintained and neither side should do anything to disturb the *status quo*.

The Colombo Powers' proposals with the explanation given, if implemented by China and India, would mean that in the eastern

sector the McMahon Line would be the *ipso facto* cease-fire line and Indian and Chinese troops could be posted right up to the frontier excepting at Longju and Che Dong which neither of the countries could occupy till a permanent border settlement was arrived at. In the middle sector the *status quo* would continue and as India was in physical—civil and military—control of the entire territory up to the Himalayan watershed in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, there was going to be no alteration to that position. In the Western Sector, i.e. in Ladakh, the Chinese would withdraw 20 kilometres from their line of occupation, i.e. their 1960 claimed line except for slight deviations in Depsang plains and Demchok area and the Indians would hold their existing positions along that line and in that 20-kilometre belt there would be joint civilian posts of the Chinese and the Indians. This would mean that in the south-eastern portion of Ladakh from Demchok to Spanggur the Chinese would vacate the entire territory of India which they had occupied by force and even withdraw from some portions of their own territory and India could then establish civilian posts in these places and so could China. In the Aksai Chin, Lingzi Tang and Depsang Plains, the Chinese would generally have to withdraw from most of their westernmost positions and even from a portion of the circular road from Shamul Lungpa to Lanak La. This demilitarised area would be occupied by civilian staff of both the countries.

So, with these explanations the Colombo proposals came nearest to the demands made by Pandit Nehru of Chinese withdrawals before he would enter into any talks. At the instance of the Prime Minister, Parliament endorsed the Government's acceptance of these proposals. On the other hand, though during Smt. Bandarnaike's visit to Peking with the proposals, China had said that she was going to give a positive response, after the explanation given by these powers at New Delhi, China did not show any willingness to accept these proposals and made reservations where these were at variance with her own cease-fire proposals. She insisted that the main purpose of the Six was to bring the two countries to the negotiating table and this should be done without preconditions. This was the first diplomatic set-back

which China received and she thereby put herself in the wrong in the eyes of these six countries who were friends of both India and China. All their efforts at restoring and promoting friendly relations between the two Asian countries were rendered futile due to Chinese intransigence which thus blocked further peace talks. So they were frustrated and disillusioned. The fact that this friendly approach by six neutral, nonaligned Asian and African countries had been ultimately nullified by the Chinese had its own psychological effect on the minds of the other Afro-Asian countries and even on the minds of the socialist countries of Europe. To offset this and to isolate India, China, from her position of strength, made great efforts throughout the whole of 1963 to oust India from her position of influence in Africa by trying to win the friendship of the African countries and Chou En-lai made extensive tours and promises of lavish assistance. But the Africans, learning from the bitter lessons of the Indians, had become doubly wary and China's ministrations generally fell on deaf ears and, instead of being able to isolate India, it was China which gradually started becoming isolated. At one time the Chinese had also tried to gain influence in South America, but she was finally disowned even by the South American Communist parties. China also hastily concluded border treaties with Afghanistan, Mongolia and Burma, but in joint communiques issued in Burma and Afghanistan, these countries stressed in their statements that peace between India and China should be restored on the basis of the Colombo Powers' proposals. As it was China which had so far refused to accept the Colombo proposals, inclusion of this suggestion in the communiques was really a slap in China's face. Ultimately by 1964 the only real friend China was left with was Pakistan not because of any ideological unity between her and China but because of their common hostility towards India.

The upshot of all this was that though India's military prestige, which had been high till then in the Asian and African countries, had received a severe blow, she held on to all the territories which were under her occupation prior to September, 1962 except in north-east Ladakh. Most of this area in N.E. Ladakh had been

occupied by the Chinese prior to September, 1962 but India lost the strip of territory (2,500 sq. miles) east of the Chinese-claimed line which she had occupied before the hostilities. Considering the nature of this terrain, the net material loss in territory was little; but the humiliation suffered was great.

It was natural that there had to be an enquiry into the reasons for the failure of the army in the 1962 operations against the Chinese both because of the inherent necessity of such an enquiry and because of public demand. A committee was formed with Lt.-Gen. Henderson-Brooke and Maj.-Gen. P.S. Bhagat to investigate into the causes of the reverses. The main points of investigation were to find out what was wrong with the training of Indian troops, equipment issued, system of command, physical fitness of the troops and capacity of the commanders at all levels to influence the men. This report was available in the month of July, 1963 and the Defence Minister, Shri Y.B. Chavan, made a statement in the Lok Sabha on September 2, 1963.

Whilst the debate was going on and the Defence Minister had yet to make his reply, many allegations were made in the Lok Sabha as well as in public about alleged political interference in the operations which was held to be responsible for the reverses. This criticism was based on certain misunderstanding of the facts but yet it was persistent and it was necessary that the misconceptions should be dispelled by a forthright statement in the Lok Sabha detailing all the facts in their proper perspective to let the country understand the nature of mistakes committed, if any, and then fasten responsibility. Without this, the atmosphere in the country was being vitiated. So, on September 1, 1963, in the evening, I met the Prime Minister and suggested to him the necessity of making such a statement. I went over all the facts chronologically in his presence to sort out whether there was political interference in the operations. I stressed that if the decision to resist the blatant Chinese aggression on our territory was considered to be political interference, then only this charge could be held to be correct; but I failed to see how there could be any military operations without a political decision to that effect; and in this particular case how could the Government be justified

if it had decided not to use the army to force the Chinese to vacate their aggression. For the large-scale intrusion by the Chinese in north-east Ladakh, the Government had been criticised time and again for not taking any positive military action to oust the enemy. A blatant aggression had taken place in Kameng also and the same criticism would have been hurled that no action had been taken. But, apart from the question of public pressure, it was necessary for the Indian Government to meet the Chinese challenge at some place, and in the opinion of the army, they were in the best position to resist that aggression in Kameng Division. At no stage till Kaul had visited Nyamkachu had the Army Headquarters told the Government that they were incapable of ousting the Chinese from that sector. In fact, the views expressed by the COAS and the Army Commander in all Defence meetings used to be very optimistic about their ability to do so. The mobilisation of the troops, the quantum of troops, the equipment supplied, etc. had all been decided by the Army Headquarters and the Prime Minister or the Defence Minister had in no way interfered with these decisions or influenced them. These were not matters for discussion in any Defence meeting. In fact, the Prime Minister was away from India from September 8 till October 1, when these movements were taking place. The Defence Minister himself was away from September 20 to 30. It was only after Kaul had visited Nyamkachu and had returned to Delhi on October 11, 1962, that the Government were told that the Nyamkachu position was militarily untenable. But Kaul's views were not supported by his superiors, the Army Commander and the Chief of Army Staff, who, on the other hand, held that the position could and should be held. With such an opinion before him, what decision could the Prime Minister have given other than the one that he gave, viz. to ask the army not to go into the offensive but to hold the Nyamkachu position? Where then was the question of political interference in this matter? Again, when Kaul on his return from Delhi sent another SOS reiterating his earlier views that the Nyamkachu position was untenable, and the Defence Minister along with the Chief of Army Staff, etc. visited Tezpur, a decision to hold Nyamkachu was taken

in the absence of the Defence Minister by the Generals themselves. The question of political interference, therefore, did not arise. As regards the defence of the Sela Ridge, this position was also selected by the Army Headquarters and from all accounts, including those from foreign observers, the position was considered to be unassailable. Again, the question of disposition, what troops were to be moved there, what were to be the defensive positions, etc., had all been decided by the army. No reference to the Government was necessary nor was it made. Only in the case of withdrawal of troops from the Pakistan front Government's prior approval was taken. Therefore, again, the question of political interference did not arise.

I told the Prime Minister that a great deal of uninformed and unfounded criticism was being freely levelled at the Government throughout the country and the Prime Minister's silence in the matter made the people feel that the criticisms were probably correct. So, it was necessary that during the current debate in the Lok Sabha these misconceptions should be removed so that the attempt that was being made by some interested sections to deliberately denigrate the Government and the Prime Minister could be foiled. I also mentioned that some criticism was being levelled against Intelligence also either by interested people who wanted deliberately to decry Intelligence or by people who had no means of knowing what Intelligence had reported. Thus a general feeling had grown that Intelligence had failed, which was not a fact. However, the Prime Minister was in the best position to judge whether this criticism was justified or not. The Prime Minister said that he had always held that the assessments given by Intelligence were correct and he had said so in Parliament. He had conveyed the same views to many Members of Parliament who had come to him for information during this debate. I told him that so far as the criticism of Intelligence was concerned, this did not unnerve us because we knew our facts and, though these criticisms were all basically unfounded, it was not necessary to give a public reply and it was best to keep Intelligence in the background. However, the persistent attempt to denigrate the Prime Minister was producing

an adverse effect on the morale of the people, as they had started harbouring suspicions in their minds that probably the country had been let down by inept leadership.

The Prime Minister kept quiet for some minutes and then in obvious anguish simply said, "The army did not fight in Sela; so, whom shall I criticise?" I realised what great shock the evacuation of the Sela position by the army without a fight must have caused to the Prime Minister. But he had kept the shock to himself. He would not let anyone down and so he bowed his head to all the criticisms which were being unjustly hurled at him.

I was, however, not happy because I could not reconcile myself to the fact that all the poison would be churned up again and the Prime Minister, without any need, would accept the criticisms silently without a reply though there were strong arguments which he could use to dispel these criticisms. Seeing that I was not reconciled, Pandit Nehru advised me to go and see the Defence Minister and tell him my views. So I went to see the Defence Minister that night and repeated all that I had told the Prime Minister and also the Prime Minister's reactions to it. The Defence Minister said that the criticism against the Prime Minister was ill-founded and misdirected, the causes of the reverses were well-known and it was surprising that so much misgiving still persisted. Yet taking his cue from the Prime Minister, he was going to confine himself to the terms of the investigation and not allow any extraneous matters to be dragged into it. He also accepted my advice and said that he would not bring Intelligence into limelight by replying to the unfounded criticisms levelled against it and would keep it in the background. He would make a passing reference to Military Intelligence only.

The Defence Minister kept to this line in his reply to the debate on September 2, 1963. He touched on the five points of enquiry with which the Enquiry Committee had been charged and made the following constructive reply :

(1) As regards the training, the enquiry had revealed that the basic training of the troops was sound and the soldiers had adapted themselves to the mountains adequately; but the training

did not have orientation towards operations *vis-a-vis* the particular terrain and did not have a slant for a war being launched by China. They had no requisite knowledge of the Chinese tactics and ways of war, their weapons, equipment and capabilities. This knowledge was essential for building up the confidence and morale of the *jawans*. The training as well as the higher commanders' concept of mountain warfare had also to be put right. Training alone was not enough without correct leadership and, therefore, training in leadership was also necessary. He assured the House that all these deficiencies were being removed and new battle schools had been opened for toughening and battle inoculation.

(2) As regards equipment, he said that the enquiry had confirmed that there was no doubt an overall shortage of equipment both for training and for operations. But it was not the case that a particular equipment was not available at all with the armed forces anywhere in the country. The main difficulty in many cases was that while equipment could be reached to the last point in the plains and even beyond it, it was another matter to reach it in time mostly by air or by animal or human transport to the forward positions which took the brunt of the fighting. This difficulty in logistics was caused by the fast rate at which troops had been inducted mostly from the plains to the mountains and the lack of properly built roads and due to an overall shortage of vehicles. The weapons with which our troops were armed were adequate to fight the Chinese and compared favourably with the enemy's weapons. The Defence Minister said that action had been started to remove the deficiencies noticed in equipment particularly those required for mountain warfare.

(3) As regards the system of command, the enquiry had revealed that there was basically nothing wrong with the system and chain of command. There was, however, need for realisation of responsibilities at various levels, which must work with trust and confidence in each other. Difficulties had arisen when there was departure from the accepted chain and such departure had occurred mainly due to the haste and lack of

adequate and proper planning. There were some cases of higher army formations interfering in tactical details, which should be avoided.

(4) As regards the physical fitness of troops, though it was true that an unacclimatised army could not be as fit as the one which was acclimatised, the enquiry had revealed that the troops stood the rigours of the climate well. But, though the troops were physically fit in every way for their normal task, they were not acclimatised to fight at the heights at which they were ordered to make a stand. In Ladakh, this factor presented no difficulty. However, there was deterioration in the standard of physical fitness of the middle-age group officers. The physical fitness of junior officers was good.

(5) Regarding the capacity of the commanders, the enquiry had revealed that the general standard amongst the junior officers was fair; at unit level there were good and mediocre commanders; at Brigade level the commanders were able to exercise their command; but it was at higher levels that the shortcomings became more apparent.

The Defence Minister also revealed that though these were not within the charter of the enquiry, the committee had gone into the question of Intelligence, staff procedure and higher direction of operations. Referring to Intelligence, the Defence Minister said that the report had held that generally the collection of intelligence was not satisfactory and the acquisition of intelligence was slow and its reporting vague. The evaluation was, therefore, not accurate and a clear picture of the Chinese build-up was not made available. No attempt was made to link up the new enemy build-up with the old deployments. Thus field formations had little guidance whether there were fresh troops or old ones moving to new locations. The dissemination of Intelligence was slow and much faster methods had to be employed to send out processed and important information to field formations. According to the Minister, a major overhauling of the Military Intelligence system was required and though, he said, that a great deal had been done during the previous six months, the overhauling of Intelligence

was a complex and lengthy task and could only be done slowly. However, in view of its importance he was paying personal attention to it.

As regards staff-work procedure, there were clear procedures of staff-work laid down at all levels; but the enquiry had revealed that much more attention had to be given to the work and procedures of the General Staff at Service Headquarters as well as at the Command Headquarters and below, to long-term operational planning, including logistics, as well as the problem of coordination with various Services Headquarters. So one major lesson learnt was that the quality of staff work and the depth of its prior planning in time would be crucial factors in future preparedness.

Finally, talking about the higher direction of operations, he said it was necessary that even the largest and the best of the armies had to be given proper policy guidance and major directions by the Government whose instrument it was. These must bear a reasonable relation to the size of the army and its equipment from time to time.

In conclusion, the Defence Minister stressed that only a small part of the Indian Army had been affected and in the past similar reverses had been suffered by the armies of other countries also particularly when the aggression was sudden and well-prepared. The need was to remain alert for the future and to improve the state of preparedness by removing the various mistakes that had been brought out in the enquiry. This the Government were doing in all earnestness.

This debate gave a quietus to the allegations that were being levelled throughout the country and though the question propped its head time and again, the Defence Minister had succeeded in effectively quashing the unfounded criticisms that were being levelled against the Government about alleged political interference.

The Finance Minister Morarji Desai's budget of 1963, which was an austerity budget, demanded utmost sacrifices by the people to meet the increasing demands for expansion and improvement of the fighting forces. Practically every section of national

life was taxed and the severity of the proposed measures elicited admiration from many foreign countries as exhibiting India's determination to stand up to China and fight on its own with the minimum foreign aid.

It would not be fair to close this chapter without making a reference to the aid which various countries gave to India at the time of its distress. Most of the aid came from the USA and President Kennedy expressed his profound sympathy for India and promised help in every way possible. Great Britain also gave substantial aid and even smaller countries like Australia, Canada and New Zealand gave assistance according to their capacity. Even Soviet Russia helped and made available further supplies of transport planes and helicopters. Though the main effort to rearm and strengthen had to come from India, yet such assistance did a great deal to accelerate the process and fill the gap while India was still building up her defence industries. In the field of radar, the assistance was invaluable as India was not yet in a position to produce the necessary equipment.

But one result of accepting this foreign aid in arms was that India had to pay heed to the pressure that came from Great Britain and America to make peace with Pakistan. So, talks had to be opened and the Swaran Singh-Bhutto talks went on for several months in sessions both in New Delhi and Rawalpindi. But though India was willing to accommodate Pakistan by even giving up large slices of the valley and the Poonch-Rajauri area, Pakistan, taking advantage of India's difficulty, was uncompromising in her stand and would be satisfied with nothing less than the whole of Jammu and Kashmir minus only the three districts of Jammu, Udhampur and Riasi which adjoined India. So the talks ended in failure and Pakistan continued to maintain her hostile attitude which took a malevolent shape towards the end of the year. But that is another story.

So the end of 1963 saw China still poised in an aggresive posture north of the Himalayas and carrying on continuous propaganda against India and issuing periodic threats against that

country, whilst India was still recovering from the shock which she had received in October/November, 1962, and making feverish preparations to meet any similar aggression in future. There had to be both short and long-term plans for this purpose—short-term because China might attack India again before the latter was ready and long-term to meet China on equal terms provided India got sufficient time for the preparation. The country woke up to a new spirit of its own responsibilities and in Pandit Nehru's words "we had been shocked out of an existence of our own creation". It had dreamt of a peaceful world where all countries would abide by the Five Principles of Co-existence. But this dream had been shattered. Though peace might be eventually restored between India and China, there could never be a return to the 1954 state of "*Bhai-Bhai*". The cultural war between Indian and Chinese civilisations, which had been going on for centuries in South-East and Central Asia, had now become a hot war with the armies of the two countries confronting each other in an angry mood. A country which does not face challenges soon becomes soft and it is only through successive challenges that a country can progress economically, culturally, militarily and in every respect. The country was chastened after the adversity which was forced upon her by a scheming neighbour and, instead of succumbing to the threats of a very powerful enemy, she girdled her loins to prepare for the worst. This new mood was soon afterwards exhibited when the entire nation rose in great fury against the unprovoked Pakistani attack in 1965. Much remains to be done in many fields, but the progress continues. The five hundred million people of India had to unite not only to save their borders but also their honour and civilisation as well as all their weaker neighbours from this imperialist dragon, and to that work India bent all her energies for the next few years—facing serious tribulations and hardships in that process.

26 Preparations for the Future

IT WAS OBVIOUS that no longer could Defence be considered as separate from development and both must be regarded as integral and relative parts of the national economic plan. There could not be any economic development at the expense of Defence and at the same time the expenditure on Defence had to bear a relation to the economic development and the total capacity of the country to pay. In the first fifteen years after independence, India had kept her Defence expenditure down and spent most of her efforts on the development of economic resources and had made important advances. In fact, without this development, it would have been impossible for India to withstand the shock of a military defeat on the Himalayas and to accelerate her efforts in making adequate military preparations. However, there could not be any more complacency nor reliance on political negotiations alone to protect India against further Chinese aggression, which in future might be timed simultaneously with a Pakistani aggression from the west. Therefore, the Government of India undertook a large expansion of the Armed Forces and also defence industries and other subsidiary organisations. The details of these plans have been gone into carefully by Khera in *India's Defence Problem* and Kavic in *India's Quest for Security*. It is unnecessary to repeat all the details and only the following summary is given:

(1) The Indian Army's strength would be raised to 8,25,000 equipped with modern weapons.
(2) The Air Force strength would be raised to 45 Squadrons of modern aircraft with improved radar facilities and ground defences.
(3) The naval strength was to be maintained at par with the

addition of submarines but all old and obsolete vessels were to be substituted by new acquisitions or construction in India.

(4) Substantial enlargement of Defence production facilities so as to reduce dependence on foreign supplies as far as possible.

(5) Radical improvement of tele-communication equipment to replace the old sets which had proved to be inadequate in the past.

(6) Development of border roads right up to the frontier and also parallel roads along the border.

(7) Expansion of Defence Research Organisation and setting up a department for strategy and planning.

Though the work of expansion had been started on an ad hoc basis immediately after 1962, the actual plan was finalised in 1964 and was to be completed in a five-year period by 1969. The defence expenditure during this period was to increase from 474 crores in 1962-63 to nearly 1,000 crores in 1968-69 budget, and would eventually stand at probably 1,100 crores in the course of the next couple of years. Foreign exchange requirement for expansion of production facilities and for acquiring new weapons was to be met out of the total foreign exchange allotments by the various countries for India.

In terms of new Divisions, etc. the army would consist of 20 Divisions, including a few formations, which would be capable of expansion in emergency. There would be eight Mountain Divisions specially raised, organised, trained and equipped for operations in the northern frontiers. The defects in the training mentioned in the Henderson-Brooke Report were to be eliminated by setting up training centres in jungle warfare in mountainous regions at various stations and more exercises in simulated battle conditions were to be introduced.

Modern weapons include the 7.62 bore semi-automatic rifle in place of the .303 breach-loading rifle, the sterling sub-machine gun in place of the sten and better mortars, including the heavy Brandt mortar. Tele-communication equipment has been developed

and portable and hardy units suitable for cold and mountainous regions have been produced. Avadi has started producing the Vijayanta tank—a medium tank of high calibre. Production of army vehicles, the 3-ton Shaktiman, the Jonga (Jeep) and Nissan one-ton power wagon have all been accelerated. The 5-ton Mercedes-Benz produced by the Tatas has proved to be a versatile performer. A more efficient organisation has been set up and better facilities provided for overall repairs and replacement.

The Air Force had been developed into a force of 45 squadrons. For the supersonic fighter, the IAF has adopted the MIG-21, for the manufacture of which factories have been set up at Nasik, Koraput and Hyderabad with Russian collaboration, and it was expected that nearly 500 MIG-21s would be available by 1970. For sub-sonic interceptors, the Hunter was retained as the main aircraft and the older forms of Vampires, Mysteres, Ouragons were to be replaced by Indian-built MK-1 fighters. However, this particular programme has met with some difficulty and has yet to make a progress. The production of the short-range Gnat has continued. For transport, India acquired more AN-12s from Soviet Russia and also a fair assortment of C-119s, Caribous and C-47s from the USA. India also developed her own AVRO 748. Improved facilities were now available for the maintenance of aircraft and the main repair base was shifted from Kanpur to Nagpur.

For the Navy, the most important departure was to have a submarine wing with Russian-built submarines at a new base at Visakhapatnam. The search for new destroyers still continues. Three frigates have been offered by Britain and are expected to be delivered some time in 1971. But not depending on supplies from foreign sources alone, India is constructing her own frigates, mine sweepers and dredgers at Mazhagaon, Garden Reach and other Docks.

As regards defence industries, the most important development was the production of the first medium tank (Vijayanta) towards the end of 1965. Since then production has increased and several regiments have been equipped with this tank. Seven new factories have been set up for the production of arms and ammunition

and three more were in the process of being set up at the end of 1968. An Engineering Factory at Ambajhari and the Filling Factory at Chanda have started production of certain equipment. A vehicle factory is to go into production in 1971. The Khamaria plant is producing aircraft ammunition. The production capacity of existing ordnance factories has been considerably increased. Self-sufficiency has been achieved in all forms of small arms and ammunition and also in light artillery weapons and their ammunition. A new field gun is likely to go into production soon. Older artillery of medium calibre are being replaced by modern ones. Self-sufficieney has also been achieved in the production of all other types of equipment like clothing, parachutes and hundreds of other items that are required to equip a soldier.*

The above should not make us self-complacent in the belief that we have achieved self-sufficiency in our defence industries. That is not the correct picture. Though much has been done, a great deal has yet to be achieved. These industries still face serious shortages in many of the basic raw materials like special steels and alloys which are required for the manufacture of tanks and aircrafts and have to depend on imports from abroad. And in case of the Navy, excepting the frigate, we are not in a position to manufacture any of the bigger fighting ships or the Submarines. We do not yet produce some of the basic chemicals required for explosives and they have to be imported. These foreign sources of supply are apt to be interrupted during a crucial period. That is why it is so necessary to expand the industrial base of the country on which Pandit Nehru had laid so much stress.

In the field of road communications, the Border Roads Organisation has undertaken a programme of constructing nearly 4,000 miles of new roads and improving 3,000 miles of existing roads. The Leh-Srinagar Road had been considerably improved and had been extended right up to Chushul and another road connecting Manali to Ladakh via Rohtang Pass is also nearing completion. A highway along the Himalayan foothills parallel

*Information collected from the 1969 budget speech of the Minister of Defence Production and other published papers.

to the North Eastern Railway from Western UP to Assam is under construction. Many new airfields have been constructed in the forward areas and dummy airfields have been built and the Leh airfield has been considerably improved. Practically all the roads leading to the Indian northern frontiers, which were in the programme, have also been completed.*

It will, therefore, appear that considerable progress has been made in the development of military potential and road communications for meeting any further threat from China.

The war with Pakistan in 1965 and Pakistan's continued hostility and alliance with China make it obvious that in future India must ensure against a joint Pakistani-Chinese attack on India. Moreover, the training and the equipment of the forces operating against Pakistan and China have to be different, though a Mountain Division could be employed in the areas of Kashmir and Poonch also. The fact that Pakistan, after its discomfiture in 1965, has been feverishly strengthening and arming herself by making large-scale purchases from all over the world and would now have available Chinese and Russian equipment also has a bearing on India's own preparations, because it would be extremely dangerous for India if Pakistan attains superiority over India in arms.

The Research and Development Wing has also shown considerable progress and has assisted in the designing, development and indigenous production of weapons and equipment. It also provided scientific support to the three services in the fields of Physiology, Psychology, Nutrition, etc. It has several indigenous developments to its credit, e.g. the Mountain Gun, the Semi-Automatic Rifle, Anti-Tank Grenade and Mine, etc. It has done good work in the field of radar and trans-receiver sets. It is still an expanding organisation and is tackling an increasing number of problems posed to it.**

Though the reorganisation of the Army has nearly been completed, something has to be done to improve the cost-effectiveness

*Information collected from the Report for the year 1968-69 of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport.

**Budget speech of 1969 of the Minister of Defence Production.

of the force, and the defence authorities are giving attention to this matter. According to Khera, it is possible to reduce the expenditure on Defence by at least one hundred crores by eliminating wastages without in any way diminishing the strength of the Army. This is a problem which faces not only the Indian Army but all armies of the world and improving the cost-effectiveness of the army is receiving the utmost attention in many countries.

Side by side with the strengthening, enlarging and improving the army, a para-military force, called the Border Security Force, has been raised to protect the long frontiers with Pakistan both in the west and in the east. Though nominally a police force, it is raised on the same lines as any other infantry group and is equipped with all small arms which the infantry possesses. New training centres have been set up both for recruits and for advance training and officers' training, and there is a good system of communication with all the frontier posts. The corresponding organisation on the Chinese frontier is the Assam Rifles in NEFA. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police in the rest of the northern frontier also performs this task but, besides the protection of the frontier, it has several other functions like intelligence and building up of people's resistance.

The concept of fighting against the Chinese has also to be changed. In 1962 and even earlier than that, we were all the time on the defensive and the Chinese guerrilla army liked nothing better than an enemy in defensive positions. Indeed, even before they had mounted their offensive in October/November, 1962, the Chinese had boasted that the Indians would find that the positions which they considered to be unassailable would suddenly become completely untenable. This is what actually happened. Till November 16, it was held in military circles that our position in Kameng frontier division was impregnable; yet almost overnight the entire situation changed and our entire army was on the retreat leaving the positions built up with great effort, without a fight. What better example of this can be found than the great TET offensive of the Viet Cong in January, 1968. By the middle of 1967, the Americans were claiming that the phase

of large-scale operations had ended, the back of the Viet Cong had been broken and the enemy was on the run and, though it would still take some time to clear the country completely of the guerrillas, the result could no longer be doubted. But this was not what the Viet Cong thought of the situation. Giap in his two famous letters of September/October, 1967 published in the *Nhan Dan* claimed that the situation, as it then existed in Vietnam, was extremely favourable for the Viet Cong. According to him, the Americans had spread themselves all over South Vietnam and were generally holding defensive positions, and though they were in good strength everywhere, they had lost their mobility. Giap claimed that this was the golden opportunity for the Viet Cong to attack every single place simultaneously leaving the Americans no scope for manoeuvres and to destroy their Air Force on the ground. This is what they did and within three days in the beginning of January, 1968, the entire situation had changed. The Americans lost nearly 40 per cent of their Air Force planes on the ground; they were overrun at many places, had to give up some of their much-advertised fortresses and nearly lost Saigon where they held on by their teeth, and even the American Embassy was attacked. The peace-move which followed later was the outcome. Hence it would be wrong to think that defensive positions in these hills and jungles could be made impregnable against the Chinese guerrillas, who have proved during the last 30 years in their fight against Japan, against Chiang Kai-shek, in Vietnam and against India that no defensive position could indefinitely hold out against them. The only time when the Indian troops had an upper hand, though temporarily, was when Kaul undertook the very limited offensive in Tsenjong in Nyamkachu on October 9, 1962, and it took the Chinese over 24 hours to oust this weak Punjab Company. If this offensive had been better planned and had been a part of a bigger offensive, it is possible that the Chinese could have been ousted from the area south of the Thagla Ridge. In retrospect, it looks that the decision that was taken on October 11 of discarding offensive action and holding defensive positions in Nyamkachu was a mistake for the reason that this tactics suited the Chinese.

Of course, our difficulty at that time was that we did not have enough troops for both defence and offence. Now that the situation has changed and well-equipped and well-trained troops are available, this concept of defending the frontier from static positions should go and the frontier should be defended not by holding positions to its south but by attacking Chinese positions to its north to reverse the process the Chinese had adopted in 1962. We do not want to prefer any claims to any territory north of the line of the Himalayan watershed but in order to defend that frontier successfully we must attack and reduce hostile Chinese concentrations north of the frontier poised for an attack. In other words, the initiative must rest with us.

It follows from this that the defensive posture which India had politically adopted against China up to 1962 must also be given up. All through the years from 1959 onwards, it was the Chinese who had attacked the Indian positions and the Indians had been on the defensive. It is they who had trespassed into our territory and forced us to make defensive preparations to prevent further encroachments and this had gone on endlessly whether in Ladakh or Uttar Pradesh or in NEFA. We had gone on protesting but the Chinese had paid no heed to these protests. The only effective action was taken when we also built up advance posts in Depsang Plains despite Chinese protests and this put the Chinese on the defensive because they did not know where we were going to advance. So the defensive posture and attitude must be discarded and, whilst we stick to our own frontiers, there should be no compunction in attacking the Chinese north and east of our frontiers if they are found to be preparing for an offensive.

This also requires strategical planning well ahead. All the movements which the Army had done in 1962 were ad hoc movements, forced by the circumstances as they arose. We followed the events everywhere and were forced by the Chinese into our various defensive positions. We did not do any strategic planning of our own. In future, there must be overall planning for action to suit various circumstances not only for fighting China but fighting China and Pakistan simultaneously.

Apart from building up the Army, giving it better training and providing modern arms, it is also very necessary to build up the Army ideologically against the Chinese. As has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, Lin Piao put the greatest stress on political indoctrination of the army and in this way he succeeded in overcoming the material shortages from which his army suffered including even shortages of food and clothing. We have no corresponding training in India either for the army or for the other civilian organisations. Amongst the two enemies with whom India might have to fight, no ideological indoctrination is required so far as Pakistan is concerned. Whether it is in the villages or in the towns, the anger against Pakistan is so strong that people are ready to identify it as a mortal enemy and are ready to fight it whenever Pakistan shows aggressive tendencies. No ideological preparation is necessary for that purpose. Moreover, in the area where the main Pakistani attack could materialise, that is Punjab, the people are mentally so prepared that they would come forward in thousands to assist the Army. In the Indian villages there is no subversive propaganda to detract from the determination of the people to fight Pakistan. Even if there was any, it would fall on deaf ears. But this is not the case so far as China is concerned. China is still considered to be remote. The frontiers threatened are not very well known by the villagers of Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh or Maharashtra, and the cause of conflict with China is not clearly understood. Moreover, the Chinese have been consistently carrying on propaganda that they want to befriend the Indian people who are being oppressed by the bourgeois, capitalist and reactionary Government which deserve to be thrown out. A similar propaganda against the Government is carried on by some of the opposition political parties thus creating a gap between the Government and the people. We have no means of propagating among the Chinese masses that we are their friends and we have no clash of interests and the main difficulty stems from the oppressive and dictatorial nature of their government which has suppressed their liberties and caused much misery to them. So any fight on the frontier with Chinese troops can easily be

misrepresented by the Chinese Government among their people to the effect that the Indian Government is out to destroy the Chinese people. On the other hand, in India there is a good deal of propaganda in the villages in many regions dubbing the Government of India as wholly in the wrong in the conflict with China and as the fighting material almost wholly comes from the villages, this has its effect on the troops, police, etc. It is very necessary that this state of affairs should be remedied, because unless the fighter knows clearly and supports unreservedly the cause for which he is fighting, he cannot really put forth his best, especially when the physical environment in which he will have to fight is so difficult and overwhelming. This absence of a clear ideology makes the American Army vulnerable in Vietnam because, with so much dissension at home and opposition to military drafts, the soldier is not certain that the cause for which he is fighting is right. The Viet Cong guerrilla, however, has no such misgivings. His mind is clear and he is not plagued by any nagging doubts about the correctness of his stand.

From the bitter experience gained in the NEFA operations, Kaul has drawn some very pertinent lessons and this can be found in his book, *The Untold Story*. He has summed up this as follows: "The Chinese had prepared themselves thoroughly for this war whereas we had not. Before we embark on operations against the Chinese or any other enemy in future, we must study their ways of warfare, acquire sufficient knowledge of guerrilla tactics, learn the art of improvisation, travel light on austere rations and position our Forces in the right place, in time. We must also have an army of sufficient strength, having adequate air, armour, artillery, engineer, signal and logistical support, physically up to the rigours of the inhospitable terrains in which it has to fight and with a high state of training and leadership. What our Armed Force needs is not only adequate weapons and equipment but a radical re-orientation of its mental outlook. We must infuse in it an inspired spirit and the will to fight to the bitter end. Also, we must develop the ability to mobilize the whole nation speedily to the active support of its Armed Force in time of war, both in word and in deed". I hope proper heed is being paid to

these lessons which Kaul had to learn the hard way.

Immediately after the withdrawal of the Chinese, practically following in their footsteps, both the NEFA Administration and Intelligence went back to their old posts and by February/March, 1963 the posts all along the frontier, including Ladakh, which had to be vacated during the operations in the previous October/November had been reoccupied. In the next two years, many new posts were opened to cover the passes all over the frontier where they did not exist previously and an accelerated programme of recruitment and training was introduced to find men for these new assignments. Thanks to the availability of foreign aid, a good supply of communication sets and monitoring equipment was available and thus one of our main drawbacks was overcome and the old and heavy wireless sets of 1942 vintage, unsuitable for the high mountainous territory, were replaced by modern portable sets. With better communications and the IB also acquiring helicopters for communicating with checkposts, supervision of the working of the posts and the transmission of intelligence both became much better. Monitoring facilities also improved greatly and, with a larger turn out of Chinese-knowing personnel, it was possible to keep pace with the increased flow of interceptions.

The checkposts hitherto had been static units and as soon as a particular post had to be abandoned, its intelligence operation practically ceased. This was a handicap from which we had suffered in October/November, 1962. The posts had to be abandoned as soon as the army units in the vicinity withdrew, as no prior arrangement had been made to make it possible for the posts to exist by themselves even without military backing. While the posts existed, they had worked extremely well, but were forced to go into cold storage once they lost their locations. This weakness was removed by setting up an armed organisation to back the Intelligence posts so that even if a particular post had to withdraw from its existing location, it would remain an operational unit and would continue to function even after withdrawal. It would be possible for such units to exist and operate even in the territory occupied by the enemy and send valuable

intelligence from behind the enemy lines. This is a unique experiment which has not been tried in the past and it is hoped that in any future operation the Intelligence will not be overwhelmed due to any temporary military reverses which the army may suffer; and when own army would advance beyond our frontiers, it would be possible for these posts also to advance and continue the operations. Therefore, in place of a static unarmed Intelligence organisation with poor methods of communication, was set up an armed, mobile Intelligence organisation with modern method of communication trained even to subsist and operate behind the enemy lines for an indefinite period.

Success of army operations and more so of Intelligence work in areas threatened by a powerful enemy depended a good deal on the active support which the local population would give and the sacrifices which they were prepared to make for the sake of the country. Naturally the population living in the frontier regions had to bear the main brunt of the enemy's fury and it was their privilege to be the protecting shield for the rest of the population. There was an erroneous impression that active cooperation could be secured without preparing the people for it. This myth was exposed in NEFA where the people, whilst maintaining their loyalty to the Government of India, remained indifferent about the respective positions of the Indian and the Chinese Armies. In other words, though they did not support the Chinese, they did not at the same time go out of their way to make it difficult for the Chinese to stay and operate on Indian soil. Nor could they be expected to do so when no organisation had been set up and no training had been given and there was no assurance that adequate assistance would be coming from the plains to maintain them.

It was Pandit Nehru's idea that the entire frontier population should be ideologically and physically built up to a high state of preparation so that they could confidently face any future Chinese onslaught; and even if the Indian Army was compelled to withdraw from certain areas, the population would no longer be a passive and helpless witness of the Chinese advance, but in its place there would be active opposition in every village,

every hill, every corner to every move by the Chinese, so that they would be frightened of their own shadows and would find it extremely costly even to exist on the Indian soil. The strength of such an organisation had been exhibited time and again in various parts of the world and Pandit Nehru was certain that such an organisation could be built up in India also, and the job was given to the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, probably because in November, 1962 he had offered to go to Assam to build up people's resistance.

A great deal has been done to implement Pandit Nehru's ideas in all these frontier areas and impartial observers, who have visited them, have come back with a high appreciation of people's preparation and their morale. It is true that the service mind, both civil and military, does not easily accept the potentialities of people's resistance. It is surprising that this should be so when we see the most powerful army in the world, the American Army, being pushed into the sea by the Viet Cong guerrillas. As one of the workers in this field has pointed out, the tribal blood has to mix with the soldier's blood so that a common bond can be formed; so it is necesary that the entire frontier population gets involved in this great patriotic effort to save the country by assisting the armed forces in every way possible, by raising the morale of the people and by resisting the enemy even if the Army has to withdraw for some time and then work closely when the day of reckoning comes. In such an organisation the civil administration could also take shelter and operate and in that case it would not have to withdraw in the wake of the enemy advance. Retreating troops would also find every type of help and succour.

The response from the people has been enthusiastic and nearly two million people have been trained all over the frontier, and there is every reason to believe that they will give a very creditable account of themselves when such contingency arises again. The enthusiasm amongst the women has been equally strong and nearly 20 per cent of all the trainees are women. Basic training has been given in the villages to both men and women. Advance training centres have been set up in various regions; officers'

training, specialists' training, etc. has also been given to a large number of people. This organisation has been ideologically built to offer resistance to the Chinese in every way possible and never to succumb to threats and reprisals.

A few instances would prove how effective this organisation can be. When in October, 1965, the Chinese threatened to attack India to support their Pakistani friends, 800 volunteers in one region were asked to go underground with rifles and ammunition. They remained in hiding in jungles and hills for over a month, were fed by the villagers, and cheerfully bore cold, discomfort and every form of difficulty. Not one rifle or a round of ammunition was lost. In the cold heights they spent nights and days in hiding and often exercised by staging simulated raids. Their morale as well as the morale of the people who were sustaining them was high. Government did not spend anything for this. In another area, that is NEFA, though the Political Officers had not been very sympathetic to this organisation and were rather doubtful about its efficacy, there was no dearth of trained volunteers to guard bridges, to act as guides for the Army and also to form underground groups, and later it was the unanimous opinion of the Political Officers that it was because of this organisation that the NEFA population remained steady during October/November, 1965. In the Jammu-Pakistan frontier, the organisation did an excellent job to ferret out and neutralise or kill armed Pakistani infiltrators in 1965. In North Bengal and Assam, the organisation guarded all bridges and airfields and kept close watch for paradrop of infiltrators.

During October, 1962, it was felt that India did not have an organisation which could operate behind the Chinese lines if the Chinese advanced into the Indian territory. The job of organising such a force was also given to the Director of IB because of his long association with the people who could be utilised for such purposes. This was also a new effort and a good deal has been done in that respect, and the potentialities of this force are great. It has received high praise from the COAS. Naturally such a force has to be made more or less self-sufficient with its own communications, equipment, transport,

both road and air, etc., and all this has been set up.

And lastly the Home Guards and the Civil Defence Organisations have been set up throughout the country and more specially in the vulnerable areas of North India. These will also prove to be useful in case of air attacks in keeping the population steady and assistaing the civil administration in many ways.

So, there is no danger of India being caught unprepared again and she would be able to meet any further challenge of the Chinese with confidence.

IV

Introspection

27 Intelligence

In any public controversy about the alleged failure of Intelligence, both the accuser and the accused find themselves in difficulties. No one other than those who are at the receiving end of intelligence can ever make any positive statement about what Intelligence did report or what it did not. And the number of people at the receiving end is generally only two or three and they will not oblige by disclosing the information. So accusations generally are made subjectively on the basis of vague assumptions by or at the instance of interested persons and so are generally wide off the mark. It is equally difficult for Intelligence to defend itself because of the vague nature of charges made, and even if a specific charge is made, in order to refute it, Intelligence would have to disclose facts which it would not be in the interest of the country or the administration to reveal. And against a vague charge that Intelligence has failed an equally vague defence that the charge is unfounded does not make any sense. This very fact that Intelligence cannot reply or does not reply, however, makes it further vulnerable, because people can go on making irresponsible statements against Intelligence without taking the slightest care to ascertain the actual facts. In any case, even if they tried to verify the facts, they would not be able to do so because they would not get them. Moreover, Intelligence does not have, nor does it require, a public relations department to feed the public with propaganda as some other departments do. Therefore, when some other department feeds the press or writers with allegations against Intelligence, vague as they must be, the latter cannot and does not reply. It would be highly undesirable for Intelligence to enter into public controversies about its alleged successes or failures, because then it would have to make certain

disclosures which might not be in the interest of the country. Unfortunately, however, this type of repeated and unrefuted propaganda, though often initiated by interested parties or persons, leaves a suspicion in people's minds that probably everything is not right with the country's Intelligence even though the suspicion may be quite baseless.

Nor can at any time everything be hundred per cent right with Intelligence, either of India or of any other country in the world. When dealing with a foreign country, Intelligence can only aim at getting some of the facts, as it would be impossible for any organisation, whether the CIA or MI-6 or the KGB or the IB, to get everything about the intentions, plans, preparations and the doings of a foreign country. For example, what was in Mao Tse-tung's mind even Liu Shao-chi did not know nor did Lo Jui-ching, the ex-Chief of Intelligence, who was the Chief of General Staff of Communist China when he was sacked. It would, therefore, be a tall order to ask either the Indian Intelligence or the Intelligence of any other country to predict correctly what Mao is thinking at any time. All that can be done is to draw certain conclusions from his open statements, from some of his known postures, from the background of his previous thinking and the period during which the utterances have been made, and the circumstances, internal or external, which are confronting China at that time. And even when every piece of evidence has been sifted carefully, the conclusion may not be quite correct. The world is still guessing what was the aim of Mao's cultural revolution; did he do it himself or was he forced into it by powerful groups whom he could not defy? There are too many imponderables in matters of foreign intelligence. The British view is that if Intelligence can predict even 30 per cent of it correctly it could be considered to be successful. In India, we have generally attempted to reach a much higher standard of accuracy and impartial consumers have acknowledged that the index of accuracy of IB reports on foreign intelligence was as high as 75 per cent. In internal intelligence it was even higher. This is because, from the very beginning of our functioning in independent India, we worked

seriously according to the advice of Sri Rajagopalachari, who told us to follow the Kural's injuction that for every piece of intelligence there should be three independent sources of corroboration.

It is an established fact in Intelligence that on very few occasions an Intelligence Organisation has been able to predict the date, manner and direction of an enemy invasion of the country. If it could, then the invasion would not come off. The British and the French did not know when the Germans would take Holland, Denmark or Norway or when and where they would break the Maginot Line; and, with all indications on the ground, the Germans could not accurately foretell when and where the Allied landing on the French coast would take place. The Japanese caught the Americans unprepared at Pearl Harbour though the latter claim that they had broken the Japanese naval code; and the Japanese did not know when the Americans were preparing to land on Okinawa or drop a bomb on Hiroshima. Therefore, if Indian Intelligence could not say on which date the Chinese attack would come in 1962, or the Chinese did not know that Kaul was going to attack Tsenjong, or the Pakistani Intelligence failed to predict the date and direction of the Indian counter-attack in 1965, these facts only conformed to the axiomatic truth that some things just cannot be done by Intelligence and, therefore, there is no point in blaming Intelligence for an alleged failure.

The second fact is that all Intelligence Organisations have their limitations and the users, that is the Prime Minister and the Minister concerned, must know what the limitations are. It is no use giving Intelligence a target which is beyond its capacity; and yet within its limits Intelligence should be able to provide a fairly accurate picture of the things that matter. Then again there are some things which some Intelligence Organisations can do and others cannot. For example, the Americans, with their satellite photography, can get a good picture of the Chinese missile stations in Lop Nor, but the British cannot do so because they have not got the satellites; nor can the Indians. We have to depend on the Americans to let us have the

pictures, and how much they give depends on their goodwill. When some countries are members of a defence pact, like the NATO Pact, they may pool their intelligence. But if a country is outside any such pact, it has to fend for itself. However, on the borders of India it is possible for India to know more accurately what the Chinese positions and their strengths are, which the Americans or the Britishers cannot find out easily. Here, therefore, there may be some identity of interest which may make some exchange of information feasible. Fortunately, in India there never had been any differences between Intelligence and the Government over the former's assessments and the Government clearly knew the capabilities of Intelligence and also were confident that it could measure up to its responsibilities in most circumstances. I have mentioned in an earlier chapter what Lord Mountbatten, the then Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Great Britain, said on May 1, 1963, when I showed him the report which we had sent in June, 1962, correctly predicting Chinese military action that autumn. Lord Mountbatten's view was that this single report absolved Intelligence of all charges levelled against it and if he were the Chief of Staff he would have moved troops forward to forestall the attack. He was proud that the Indian Intelligence, with which he had been closely associated when he headed the SAEF and later when he came as the Viceroy, had lived up to its highest traditions.

Most of the criticisms which have been levelled against Intelligence regarding the Chinese operations in 1962 are in the field of what is called Military Intelligence, that is about the Chinese military preparations in Tibet, their intentions, movements, etc. I have mentioned in an earlier chapter how, in spite of our protests, the Government gave the responsibility of military intelligence to the Intelligence Bureau as a result of the recommendations of the North and North-East Border Committee headed by Maj.-Gen. Himmatsinghji, Deputy Defence Minister and of the Thorat Committee. That criticism of alleged failure would be levelled against the Intelligence Bureau whenever the Army suffered any reverse had been anticipated by us and

that was the reason why we had objected in writing to the collection of military intelligence being made our sole responsibility. But the Government decided otherwise and we bowed to that decision and put forth every effort possible to bring foreign military intelligence on a par with internal intelligence. I do not say that the Government decision was wrong. Ours was a defensive posture, as, in spite of our numerous responsibilities inside the country, we were being asked to take on additional responsibilities, which in 1951/52 we were not equipped to undertake. Otherwise, in all big countries, the collection of military intelligence is always the responsibility of the Civil Intelligence Agency, and as Mankekar has pointed out in his book, this is a work which can be done only by professionals who could only be from the Civil Intelligence Agency and not by amateurs of other departments.

Military intelligence has got two distinct aspects: firstly, strategic intelligence and, secondly, operational intelligence. Strategic intelligence deals with the potential strength of an enemy, its preparations, communications, total strength, ORBAT, build-up, fortifications, armaments, morale, supplies and even political compulsions and all that, in other words, all the information that could be useful for the country to decide what is the potential threat against it from another country should that other country decide on a path of aggression. When military intelligence was made the responsibility of the IB, it was this aspect of intelligence which was entrusted to it. The other aspect of military intelligence is operational intelligence. This is required when two armies face each other in a battle. It is not possible then for any Civil Intelligence Organisation to function at the front. Intelligence then has to be collected through patrols, through observers, through air reconnaissance, by the interrogation of prisoners, by taking note of sounds, signs of movements, lights, smokes, etc. This can only be done by the military units in forward positions. Identification of units which are opposing own units has also to be done by the same method. So this is very much the responsibility of the Army itself, because there will be no Civil Intelligence Agency at the

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front. This is the division of responsibility throughout the world between the Civil and the Military Intelligence Agencies, normal strategic intelligence being handled by the Civil Agency and operational intelligence by the Military. This distinction is well known and is observed in India also. In some cases, the military authorities may request for the services of a few civilian officers to remain on their staff to assist them in evaluating intelligence, interrogating prisoners and talking with the locals, but the responsibility for operational intelligence remains with the military authorities. Similarly, though the IB employs a considerable number of fairly senior military officers to assess and evaluate all military intelligence that it collects, the responsibility for collecting strategic military intelligence remains solely that of the IB.

This division of responsibility has to be clearly understood to be able to judge where the responsibility for failure of intelligence lay in a particular case. If a unit in the front does not know what is opposing it and in what strength, it has not done enough patrolling, has not foiled enemy patrols, has not captured any prisoners, has not set up any observation posts and has not done many other things that it should have done. Neither the Civil Intelligence Agency nor even the Directorate of Military Intelligence can help the unit in this work which is entirely that unit's responsibility and which no outside agency can perform. Maj. Johri has brought out this point very clearly in his book *The Chinese Invasion of Nefa*.

Strategic intelligence itself can be divided into four parts: (1) its collection and evaluation, (2) its collation and interpretation, (3) its assessment, and (4) its dissemination. The first process, of course, is the collection of intelligence and this is the responsibility of the IB. Though every Military Intelligence Department tries to collect intelligence independently also, particularly with the help of its tele-communication network—and in India also the practice is the same—the responsibility for the collection of such intelligence rests squarely with the Intelligence Bureau. Along with that responsibility, comes the responsibility of evaluating the intelligence, that is how far it

is reliable, whether it is confirmed, whether it is only a rumour, whether it should be kept in view while seeking further confirmation, etc. This evaluation can be done only by the collecting agency which handles the sources. Of course, there is some evidence which is tell-tale, e.g. a photograph taken by air reconnaissance. Generally, in all big countries, the Civil Intelligence Agency's functions end there. The intelligence is collected, it is evaluated and the raw material is passed on to the consuming department, and in this case it will be the Directorate of Military Intelligence.

In the MI Directorate, this intelligence has to be collated and tabulated and put in charts and in maps. And it has to be properly interpreted. A simple observation by a lay source can, when properly interpreted, open up a large vista of knowledge about enemy preparations. And this interpretation can be done only by the Military Intelligence. For its own use, every Civilian Intelligence Agency also does its own collation and interpretation and so does the IB; but the responsibility for proper collation, tabulation and interpretation rests solely with the Directorate of Military Intelligence.

Then comes the work of assessment of the intelligence and drawing conclusions from it. This is a very important and difficult process because, unless proper assessment is done, the intelligence collected cannot be put to proper use and, if a wrong assessment is made, it may lead to taking wrong steps ending in disaster. One encounters the phenomena in every country that the Army Headquarters is reluctant to accept such intelligence as does not suit its preconceived ideas and, as Mankekar has pointed out in his book *The Guilty Men of 1962*, in India also the main difficulty that the IB faced was that the Army Headquarters was reticent about accepting intelligence reports and hence much of the intelligence collected went down the drain. To get over this difficulty every advanced country has set up a high-level Joint Intelligence Committee (or a National Security Committee) headed by a senior civilian officer and in which body there are senior representatives of the Civil and Military Intelligence as well as the Foreign, Defence, Interior and other Ministries

and to which scientists, economists and other experts are called when necessary. An assessment by such an independent body alone can be authoritative. Unfortunately in India, as pointed out by Khera, such a machinery did not exist prior to the 1962 debacle and the JIC that then existed was a body subordinate to the Chiefs of the Staff and, therefore, it was difficult to make it accept intelligence with which the DMI, representing the Chief of Staff, did not agree. I have mentioned in an earlier chapter how the entire assessment of the Chinese strength in Tibet got mutilated by this difference of opinion, the DMI invariably making a considerably lower assessment of the Chinese strength than the IB. In the circumstances, the IB was forced to make its own assessments and give these not only to the Army Headquarters but also to the Government. Prior to 1962, however, there was hardly ever any criticism from the Directorate of Military Intelligence or the Chiefs of Staff about the assessments made by the IB and one, therefore, has to presume that it was fairly accurate. The situation has improved now and there is a high-level JIC which makes assessments.

We then come to the fourth stage of intelligence, that is its dissemination. The JIC sends its assessments to the Chiefs of Staff and to the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister and other Members of the Cabinet where this is necessary. But all this assessment cannot be fed to the commanders in the field and, therefore, from these assessments extracts have to be taken and edited to suit particular theatres and these have to be sent to the respective theatre commanders for their information. This is called the Intelligence Summary, and when Dalvi in his book complains that he was not given any "Intelligence Summary" this is what he had in view. The responsibility of preparing and sending out these Intelligence Summaries is entirely that of the Directorate of Military Intelligence and no Civil Intelligence Agency can do anything about it.

Then comes another stage, that of assimilation, i.e. whether the field commander has properly assimilated the intelligence that has been served to him by the DMI. With all the intelligence before him, the field commander may yet fail to grasp

its real import and significance. If he fails to do it then all the elaborate four-fold process to which intelligence was subjected before it was passed on to him has been in vain. It is the duty of the Army Headquarters to ensure that the field commanders pay proper attention to the intelligence summaries served to them by the DMI. And it is, therefore, necessary for the DMI to visit the field commanders frequently to see whether they have taken proper note of the intelligence given to them and also whether they have taken effective steps to collect operational intelligence.

So if the field commander complains that he was not served with proper intelligence, one has to find out what kind of intelligence is he referring to. Is it operational intelligence? Then it is his responsibility to collect it by the various means described earlier. And in most cases it will be operational intelligence which will be lacking. However, if he is complaining about the non-receipt of strategic intelligence, then one has to go to the root and find out whether the raw intelligence was available with the IB, whether it was properly interpreted by the DMI, whether it was properly assessed by the JIC, whether it was disseminated in the right form to the right persons by the DMI and whether it was properly assimilated by the field commanders. It would, therefore, be incorrect to point the accusing finger at the collecting agency whenever such a failure is alleged. Unfortunately whenever a complaint about intelligence failure is made one is apt to jump to the conclusion that the collecting agency has failed without even judging who was the complainant and whether he was at the receiving end of intelligence. But to get at the truth and to fix the responsibility one has to find which of these processes had failed and if there was really any intelligence failure at all and whether the failure was not in the commander's inability to grasp the full significance of that intelligence and his not passing it on to his subordinates.

As during my tours I often used to get complaints from the field commanders about their being kept ignorant of the developments facing them, after discussion with the then COAS, Gen.

Thimayya, we worked out a system according to which the local intelligence officers served intelligence collected by them direct to the local commanders. Thus for instance our Intelligence Officers at Tezpur and Siliguri would serve intelligence direct to the Corps Commanders at Tezpur and Siliguri respectively. This system was not free from faults because a local officer could only collect a part of the intelligence, and his own assessment might not be entirely correct. Intelligence has to be seen from many angles and can be properly assessed only at the Headquarters where reports from various subordinate agencies would be available as also intelligence collected by technical methods. Hence intelligence given by a local officer could not be complete. Still something was better than nothing. A review made by Lt.-Gen. Sen, the then CGS, in 1960 showed that on the whole the field commanders were satisfied with the intelligence they were getting by this method.

I have not, in the foregoing pages, disclosed any secrets or laid down any new principles guiding the collection and utilisation respectively of strategic and operational military intelligence and its evaluation, collation and interpretation, assessment and dissemination. These principles are well known and are set down in any textbook dealing with military intelligence; but as these principles are generally not known in this country, I have re-stated them for the benefit of the reader. These are accepted and followed throughout the world. But there may be some variations in different countries to suit the particular needs at a given time, and I have mentioned above one variation which we made in India also to suit our particular requirements, mostly because of the distances involved.

After the 1962 debacle, there was much criticism that Intelligence had failed. This criticism was voiced by army officers, in newspapers, in public and even in Parliament. But, excepting in the Army Headquarters, naturally it would not have been possible for the others to know whether there was, in fact, an Intelligence failure, and if so, where exactly that failure lay. Of course, most of these criticisms that were voiced at that time, of which some refrain is heard even now, were couched in general

terms and could only be met in a general way. But some people in the hind-sight of later information have made a few specific allegations. These will be found in (1) *The Untold Story* by Lt.-Gen. B.M. Kaul, (2) *The Guilty Men of 1962* by Mankekar, (3) *India's Defence Problem* by S. S. Khera, (4) *Between the Lines* by Kuldip Nayar and (5) *India's China War* by Neville Maxwell. I shall first deal with these specific allegations before I take on the general ones.

Kaul in his book *The Untold Story* has said at one place: "Our Intelligence system compared unfavourably with the Chinese. They had systematically introduced agents into India in general and NEFA in particular, whereas we lagged in this respect. Their agents built up a network of reporting back information to the Chinese. Some element of indoctrination of local population was achieved. Such agents are known to have taken up employment with our army units in various capacities and in NEFA Administration. The Chinese often knew of our military build-up and force in a particular area in advance, whereas similar knowledge about them was denied to us due to faulty intelligence. Many elements in local population in NEFA gave them support."

But Kaul had no material on which he could base his statement that the Chinese Intelligence was superior to the Indian Intelligence. It might or it might not have been. I cannot argue this point with him. In order to justify this allegation, Kaul says that the Chinese had introduced agents in India and NEFA in particular and they had built up a network of reporting back intelligence to the Chinese but we had lagged behind. Apparently we were getting our intelligence from the sky! The Chinese must have had agents in India and many were neutralised and put into jail by us or otherwise disposed of. Russia has agents in Great Britain and America and these countries in turn have their agents in Russia. And the counter-intelligence organisations of these countries try to find out who the agents are and neutralise them. This is a continuous war which goes on between the Intelligence Organisations of two basically hostile countries. There are factors in a country which directly or indirectly help the enemy's Intelligence and there are those that hinder such

operations. In an open society like that of India, with groups openly in support of the Chinese ideology, it is easier for the Chinese Intelligence to operate than for the Indian Intelligence in the closed society of China with no fundamental liberties. On the other hand, Tibet was a country seething with discontent, whereas such conditions did not exist in India—and so Indian Intelligence was better placed there. Kaul was the Chief of General Staff, before taking over the IV Corps, and had the Directorate of Military Intelligence under him and had worked in close liaison with the IB, but during that period he had never complained of any shortcoming of Intelligence.

Kaul has alleged that these agents had done some amount of indoctrination. He probably means subversion. The Chinese had no doubt tried to subvert not only the local population of NEFA but of other parts of India also but had signally failed. Kaul says that the Chinese agents had taken up employment in army units and NEFA Administration. If there were foreign agents employed in the Indian Army, it was his duty as the CGS to root them out. The Security Organisation, working in each Army unit, is meant for this very specific task. After the 1962 debacle, when this cry had been raised, every instance of reported suspicion had been carefully sifted by the IB, the State CID and the NEFA Administration with the assistance of the Army and had been proved to be baseless.

Kaul asserts that the Chinese knew of our military build-up whereas such information was not available to him. I have already stated that when two hostile armies face each other, it becomes a matter of collecting operational intelligence which can be done only by the army units themselves. And how? By sending out regular patrols, by setting up observation posts, by monitoring of forward-line messages, by air-reconnaissance and by the interrogation of prisoners. But, as Maj. Johri points out, there was hardly any patrolling by the Indian Army and whenever a patrol went out it never came back. On the other hand, the Chinese patrols in strength seemed to have penetrated through the gaps in our lines and taken their positions well behind the Indian front. Naturally, they were

in a better position to know about the Indian build-up. The Indians had not penetrated the Chinese lines and so did not know enough about them. No Chinese was captured, so no intelligence could be collected from interrogation; whereas the Chinese had taken several hundred prisoners. If Kaul had no information about the Chinese build-up he cannot blame somebody else for it.

Then Kaul has alleged that many elements in the local population of NEFA gave the Chinese support. It is not right to make such a sweeping allegation against the simple tribal people. A few quislings are found in every country and in any society and there were a few in NEFA also and would have appeared in other parts of India also if the Chinese had overrun them. But by and large the NEFA population did not cooperate with the Chinese and did not show any interest in them, though the Chinese had made much effort to win them over.

At another place, speaking about the Chinese Air Force, Kaul has criticised Intelligence by saying: "Our Intelligence, of course, knew little on this subject and was only adept at presuming some facts and not realising that dispensation of exaggerated information about the enemy was as dangerous as understating the vital facts." It would be silly even to suggest that Intelligence did not realise that exaggeration of and understatement about the enemy were both dangerous. I have referred to our estimate of the Chinese air strength in Chapter 23. Our Air Force, which had its own independent contacts, never disputed this assessment. Kaul probably did not know that even in January, 1963, when the JIC met to make a formal assessment of Chinese military and air strength, it came to exactly the same conclusion about the Chinese Air Force as we had done in September, 1962. When subsequent assessments by the British and the Americans about Chinese air threat to India were made officially available to us they did not alter the situation significantly. The reasons why the Indian Air Force was not brought into use in 1962 have been explained by me in Chapter 23, and the reasons were good and sound. It would have made no difference at all in the theatre of which Kaul was in charge. In

fact, the result might have been the reverse. Therefore, this criticism against Intelligence has no substance in it.

Mankekar in his book, *The Guilty Men of 1962* in the chapter "Among the Guilty," has said: "When things go wrong the buck is passed from one to another. In this process the Civilian Intelligence, on which the Army depended for information about the enemy, has received more than its share of the blame for what happened in the 1962 war with China."

In including the IB among the guilty in 1962, Mankekar has relied heavily on the Defence Minister's statement in the Lok Sabha on September 2, 1963. I have already referred to this in Chapter 25. The Defence Minister was talking of Military Intelligence as Civil Intelligence was not and could not be within the purview of Henderson-Brooke's enquiry.

Another fact on which Mankekar has relied is the information given to him by the Army authorities that during the war against Pakistan in 1965, the IB did not report that Pakistan had two armoured divisions and not one and so the army did not make sufficient preparations for meeting the Pakistani armoured thrust at Khem Karan. This is going beyond the scope of this book because we are dealing with the operations against China. But as the matter has been raised, I would like to state categorically that the IB had, several months earlier, informed the Army Headquarters and the Defence Ministry in writing of the raising of a second armoured division by Pakistan by re-adjusting the strength of other units and drawing on reserves. Actually the fact that Pakistan was planning to do this had been reported as early as 1964. It remained a bone of serious contention between the DIB and the COAS, the former maintaining that Pakistan had two armoured divisions and the latter pooh-poohing the idea, till October 7, 1962 proved that there was in fact a second armoured division in Pakistan. And during the period the controversy was going on, the COAS was pressing for the abolition of some light armoured units, a recommendation which the Defence Minister was wise enough not to accept! Earlier during the operations in the Rann of Kutch, when the IB reported that the Pakistanis were bringing forward their armour,

the COAS disputed the information and he is reported to have told the Defence Minister that he would lay down his shirt if this imformation turned out to be true. Probably he had been assured by his American friends that the Pakistanis would not use American tanks against India or probably being a tank expert he held the view that tanks could not be used in the Rann. But very soon our troops had to withdraw in the face of Pakistani armoured thrust and air photos showed the presence of Pattons on the front and one was

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Page	*Line*	*For*	*Read*
510	31	October 7, 1962	September 7, 1965
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existence of the Ichhogil Canal was as well [illegible] tence of rivers Ravi and Chenab. Its description was available even in the Ministry of Irrigation and Power. Every Indian who had gone to Lahore had crossed the Ichhogil Canal and innumerable army officers had also done so. When the criticism was formally levelled and replied to, we were told that the earlier papers had been misplaced in the Army Headquarters and hence the misunderstanding! And yet, Choudhury had based his plan on the existence of the Ichhogil Canal. He told the Cabinet Committee that his plan was to go up to the canal and halt there and not get involved in a costly seige of Lahore.

There were many other instances when military plans went wrong because IB reports were not believed; but we are dealing with 1962 and not 1965 and so I need not lengthen the catalogue.

Mankekar has made amends by stating that "Going back to the 1962 events and the CIB's performance, it has to be conceded that while some of its reports lacked precision and details, the Civilian Intelligence Agency maintained a regular flow of vital information about the enemy activity on the other side of the line right through particularly after 1959. Much of its utility was, however, nullified by the scepticism betrayed by the Army Headquarters towards intelligence supplied by the Agency and by their reticence to act on it....

"It is evident that refusal of the Director, Military Intelligence, to pay credence to many of the reports, grave and vital in character, further handicapped the Indian Army operations in NEFA later in the autumn of 1962."

At another place, talking about the Defence Minister, Mankekar has stated: "As a Defence Minister, Menon was expected to be better informed and more alive to the critical situation fast developing on our northern frontier. Intelligence reports pouring into the Army Headquarters and his Ministry gave adequate warning as well as a good idea of the dimensions of the threat the Chinese were posing on the Tibetan border. But these reports did not fit in with the Government's thesis, and, therefore, Menon paid no credence to them." But why blame Menon? His Army Headquarters also did not believe in them! Mankekar has further to say as follows: "The latest trend in the Army Headquarters accelerated by the 1965 Indo-Pak conflict is to demand the transfer of military aspect of Intelligence operations from the CIB to the Director of Military Intelligence. Apart from the additional expense and the duplication involved, one cannot help wondering whether the present set-up at the Directorate of Military Intelligence consisting of amateurs and transients could ever prove more efficient and effective than the professionals manning the CIB. Besides, at the head of the Directorate of Military Intelligence is a bird of passage, an army officer who is no specialist and puts in a tour of duty for a couple of years at the post before moving out to another job. Intelligence is a highly specialised science with its own highly evolved techniques. Only specialists and professionals could do

justice to its exacting and developing demands." This is not Mankekar's view alone. This is the view that is held in every advanced country and is adhered to in allocating the country's intelligence responsibilities.

We now turn to Khera's book, *India's Defence Problem.* Referring to the debate in Parliament on the Henderson-Brooke Committee Report, Khera has said: "The Defence Minister proceeded to tell the Parliament about the intelligence system. There is naturally very little that can be exposed to the public about an intelligence system or its working without damaging the very function which it performs, namely, to gather information not otherwise obtainable for the purpose of national defence. Chavan assured the Parliament that necessary measures had been adopted and more would be taken to ensure the continuous improvement in collection, assessment and coordination of all the information that would be necessary to provide the essential base on which alone correct diplomatic policy as well as real day-to-day military preparations can be based." As K. Subramanyam, in his two articles in *The Hindustan Times* dated October 18 and 25, 1970, has pointed out, Khera should have made it clear that Chavan was speaking about reorganising the Military Intelligence and not the Civil Agency. He left it vague and that has caused some amount of misunderstanding.

In another place Khera says as follows: "The Armed Forces Commanders seemed to be very little informed and to have very little knowledge as to what was going on across the border of India and even within those borders. Intelligence about anything outside India was somebody else's job. Not only there was little information available to examine and evaluate but what little there was seemed to have been left over without sufficient attempt on proper appraisal. Such arrangements as there were for joint reviews languished through desuetude. The system was improved in many ways but not until the events of 1962. This lack of information made realistic planning difficult and you cannot make any plans unless you have all the necessary data on which to make a plan. Otherwise

there creep in far too many unknown quantities and variations, and attractive and presentable plans assume only academic interest."

Here Khera is making a wrong assumption that there was very little knowledge about the Chinese build-up. In fact, if any fault is to be found with the IB, it was that it was giving too much intelligence and not too little—too much to many people's liking. A detailed picture of the Chinese build-up, their logistics, their stores and even the state of public feeling in Tibet was quite accurately known. But the trouble was not that there was no intelligence but, as Mankekar has pointed out, little credence was paid on these reports with the result that hardly any planning was done. One of the reasons why it was not done was because the Army at that time was not thinking in terms of an all-out war with China at all and both Khera and Mankekar have stressed this point. This general statement of inadequate intelligence so lightly made does not become Khera, who throughout the crucial months of 1962, was in the full know of what was going on and what intelligence had been given. During the period he was the Cabinet Secretary, he always talked highly of the work of the Intelligence Bureau and had never complained about any shortcomings on its part.

These are, however, general allegations. But how wide off the mark one can be is proved as soon as he descends from the general to the specific. Khera says that, "No one seems to have appreciated or grasped the significance of the reports publicly coming in, through the seasonal traders of India's upper valleys bordering on Tibet, about the events of 1950 in Western Tibet and which Chou En-lai himself subsequently used for his own purpose in 1960". Khera could have specifically mentioned what reports he was talking about. In any case, in 1950 he was not in a position to know what these reports were. He is obviously referring to Chou En-lai's claim that the Chinese army entered Western Tibet in 1950 through Aksai Chin. But in this he has committed a most grievous error. He is taking Chou En-lai's statement at its face value and building a yarn round it. In Chapter 13, I have indicated that Chou En-lai pulled a fast

one when he made this claim. The Chinese Army did not come into Western Tibet through Aksai Chin but through a completely different route which nowhere came within one hundred miles of it. And the Chinese Army did not arrive in Western Tibet till the middle of 1951. As this basic fact was incorrect, there could not have been any reports by seasonal traders in 1950 that the Chinese troops came by this route. Indeed, Chou En-lai made this false claim to prove that the Chinese had always controlled Aksai Chin. Will Khera accept the argument which Chou En-lai has used to prove his case? If so, then he has to accept also Chou's argument that China had always been controlling not only Aksai Chin but the whole of North-East and Eastern Ladakh and also large salients in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and practically the whole of NEFA. I do not think Khera would do that. This only proves how in matters of intelligence one can make grievous errors when basing assumptions on inadequate knowledge.

At another place Khera has made an equally vague and equally incorrect statement against Intelligence. He has said: "Intelligence was amazingly poor and deceptive as regards the strength of the Chinese build-up, their method of waging battle, their system of logistics and communication, about almost everything of significance that might have helped the Indian forces. The consequence was that there had been very little or no planning or preparation worth the name against the kind of threat posed by the Chinese forces". Khera naturally had not seen the mass of information regarding the Chinese Army which was in IB's possession and which had been passed on to the MI from time to time. This included the history of the Chinese guerrilla army; its command structure and formations; para-military and militia forces; principles of fighting and tactical concepts; different movements like advance, attack and retire; defensive preparations; crossing obstacles like hills, rivers, barbed-wire fencing, etc.; fighting in different terrains like jungles, hills, open and built-up areas; communication, transport and technical services; personal arms and small arms including mortars and MMG's; artillery and armour; general and medical services; political

indoctrination and control; and even uniform and badges of ranks. We had a veritable dictionary consisting of all this information. The DMI must have also collected such information independently as all Army Headquarters do it with regard to the armies of countries in which they may be interested. There is also always a good deal of published material. I am sure that all this material in properly edited form must have been passed on to the lower formations. Normally the DMI keeps all the lower formations acquainted with up-to-date information on such subjects. In fact, I remember to have seen some intelligence digests issued by the MI Directorate giving all the details about the Chinese army. So there was no reason to think that such information was not available to the formation commanders. It would have been better if Khera had found out whether the information supplied had received the attention it deserved from Commanders at all levels and whether it was seriously studied by them. We have the testimony of Kaul and also the report of Henderson-Brooke that the training of the Indian Army was not oriented towards the Chinese. At another place Khera himself has said the same thing. Then why blame Intelligence!

The next book in this series is *Between the Lines* by Kuldip Nayar. I may be wrong, but I detect in this book a strain of prejudice against the IB and this comes out even at the very beginning when Nayar is dealing with the election of the Prime Minister after Shastriji's death. He says: "The voting was 355 for Mrs. Gandhi and 169 for Desai. The Intelligence Bureau, more royalist than the King, had informed the officiating Prime Minister Nanda beforehand that this would be 357 to 167. Probably for the first time in its existence the IB came close to guessing correctly". I can tell him with confidence that, instead of ridiculing the IB, if he had taken this as the index of the IB's reliability and accuracy, he would have got nearer the truth.

Kuldip Nayar has referred to an alleged incident on November 21, at Palam Airport, where he has claimed that he was the first to see the publication in *The Hindustan Times* of the Chinese announcement of a cease-fire and on this he has made an innuendo that the DIB, the Home Secretary and other members of the Home

Ministry did not have any knowledge about this cease-fire till then. He has made a genuine mistake about this. In Chapter 24, I have given in detail the chronology of events that took place on November 20, 21 and 22. In Sri Shastri's entourage Nayar must have been the first to pick up the newspaper from the stall where it had come before Patnaik and I reached the airport. But my information was not limited to newspaper reports. Our Monitor had informed me about this several hours earlier. L.P. Singh had also heard it on the radio before he came to the airfield. Nayar has referred to this again in his new book, *India—The Critical Years* and has added that, on seeing the newspaper, I telephoned to my office to get confirmation. This presumption is not correct. I required no confirmation.

At another place Kuldip Nayar has ridiculed the IB's effort to set up border checkposts on the Ladakh frontier. This is what he says: "The Home Ministry has reported that the posts established on the Ladakh border are not tenable. They will fall to the first onslaught by the Chinese". The posts were administratively under the Home Ministry. So, it is not clear to whom the Home Ministry had reported the vulnerability of these posts. Was it to the Prime Minister? He was also quite aware of the position of these posts. He had himself visited Chusul, Dungti and Demchok and all checkposts had been established with his sanction. To explain his point Nayar further says: "I remember the former Home Secretary, B.N. Jha, telling me that it was 'a bright idea' of Shri B.N. Malik, the Director of Intelligence, to establish police posts 'wherever he could' even behind the 'Chinese lines' so as to 'register our claim' on the territory. 'But', then he said, 'Malik does not realise that these posts with no support from the back will fall like nine pins as soon as the Chinese push forward. We are unnecessarily exposing the policemen to death. Frankly this is the job of the Army, but since they have refused to man the posts until full logistic support is provided, we have placed the policemen". It was certainly a "bright idea" to occupy the farthest extent of our territory claimed by us, and it is this frontier, secured by the IB up to October, 1959, with the help of the CRP, and various State Police units and the Assam Rifles,

overcoming tremendous difficulties and hardships, which remains the frontier of India today, acknowledged even by Chou En-lai as the area under India's control. Probably Nayar misunderstood Jha's comments. Jha could not have said that the IB had established police posts behind the Chinese lines, because, in fact, there was no such post nor could there be any. To prove his point that police posts had been irresponsibly set up, Nayar continues: "The posts run in a zig-zag line; 41 of them have been established, a few policemen here and few of them there, sometimes like islands in the multitude of Chinese predators". It seems that the existence of the 41 (to be exact 43) posts in North-East Ladakh, some of which fell and the rest were abandoned when the Chinese attacked the Daulat Beg Oldi area in October, 1962, has provided the grist for Nayar's criticism of the IB's work of establishing police posts on the frontier. But here Nayar has made a grievous error. The world knows that these 43 posts were not police posts, but army posts. There was not a single policeman in any of these posts. And the army was right in establishing these posts because, it was on the recognition of this fact of actual physical possession that the Colombo Powers held that India had physical possession east of the so-called Chinese line of actual control and their recommendation for Ladakh, which was certainly favourable to India, and which upset the Chinese, was based on this consideration.

Kuldip Nayar goes on to say: "One official of the Defence Ministry tells me that the USA wanted to reorganise the entire Intelligence service in India". If any Defence Ministry official did actually say this, he was either giving vent to his personal prejudices or was displaying his utter ignorance. But the pity is that a person of Nayar's experience and knowledge has swallowed this humbug. All types of rumours were floating and some even said that the USA would like to take over the entire Indian administration and the armed forces. Nayar then adds that "The US Intelligence Service knows much more than ours about the Chinese deployment on our borders". At no time then or later the US Intelligence Service could know more about the Chinese deployment on our borders than we did. It was

impossible for any other country to know more than we did about the Chinese in Tibet. Nayar again adds: "I have come to know that an attack by China was anticipated by the US Intelligence Service and Washington had informed New Delhi before October 20 about the approximate number of troops deployed by the Chinese on the Indian border". This is news to me and if the Americans knew about the Chinese deployments on our borders and also the possibility of attack, and had informed the Army Headquarters, there was no reason why the latter did not take that into account in making its own defence preparations. The COAS had not mentioned this at any defence meeting. Therefore, this information could not have been true and was one among the many rumours floated at the time to confuse the issues and sow suspicions all round. Nayar has unwittingly allowed himself to be taken in by some propaganda set afoot by the professional traducers of intelligence.

Kuldip Nayar goes on to criticise the arrest of pro-China Communists on November 21, 1962, and also the way the arrests were made. He has particularly referred to the arrest of E.M.S. Namboodiripad when, according to him, E.M.S. was writing an article in the *New Age* criticising China on the cease-fire proposals. Criticising the method of arrest, Nayar says: "Their detention is considered necessary because of the pro-China lobby working among them. But nobody in the Home Ministry, right from the Minister to Under-Secretary, saw the list of persons to be arrested. It turns out that the Director of Intelligence had supplied the list, and it was sent as it was to the States, which, although knowing that some of the people listed were not pro-China, had to arrest them because it was Centre's orders". I can assure Kuldip Nayar that his allegation is based on incomplete information. Lists of persons of various categories, who may have to be detained during different emergencies, of which one occurred during the Chinese invasion, are always prepared by the Intelligence Bureau in consultation with the State Special Branches, or when that is not possible, as has happened after 1967, independently of the latter. This list obviously cannot be shown to the Under-Secretaries or the Deputy Secretaries. Even the Secretary or the

Minister does not like to be involved in this. A person is listed on the basis of very strong material available against him. This material has to stand the scrutiny of the Judicial Tribunal which reviews all arrests under the Preventive Detention Act. It has also to be produced before the High Court if a writ petition is filed. When during an emergency the Government decides to put under detention people of a particular category, the Minister discusses in a general way with the Home Secretary and the DIB the names in that list before the list is sent to the State Governments. It is not possible, nor is it necessary, for the Home Minister or the Secretary to scrutinise the material against each particular individual. The list is sent on a recommendatory basis to the State Government, and the latter has to make up its mind which persons in the list are to be detained. There were many instances in which the State Governments did not consider the list to be exhaustive and so added other names to it. In this particular case also, several State Governments made their own modifications but practically all on the side of adding additional names. This was quite within their competence. There is no other way in which these lists can be prepared and kept secret without the persons in the list coming to know that they have been listed and giving them a chance of going underground during an emergency.

As regards Namboodiripad, naturally as he was an ex-Chief Minister and was at that time the General Secretary of the Communist Party, his name, among other prominent names, was mentioned to the Home Minister and he had approved of the arrest. Actually Namboodiripad was arrested in Delhi, the administration of which was directly under the Home Minister. At Dange's intervention, however, he was released a few days later. Kuldip Nayar says that Namboodiripad was arrested when he was writing an article criticising the Chinese aggression. I do not think one can credit Namboodiripad with a single unequivocal statement condemning the Chinese aggression. In fact, when the National Council was meeting from October 31 to November 2, 1962, to discuss the Chinese aggression, the pro-China lobby, led by Namboodiripad, had vigorously agrued that China had committed

no aggression and had strongly urged the CPI not to be party to a war against a Socialist country and to demand the solution of the border dispute through negotiations without any preconditions. (The precondition given by Pandit Nehru was that the positions held before September 8 should be restored, that is the aggression should be vacated.) However, the National Council overruled this objection and held that the Chinese had committed an aggression.

Again when the National Council met in Delhi in February, 1963, E.M.S. Namboodiripad sharply criticised the November Resolution of the National Council, which he described as fundamentally wrong. He was definite that the party was wrong in holding the view that a Socialist State should not have committed aggression against a nonaligned country and in its attitude of lining up behind the national bourgeoisie. However, he was overruled by the majority in the National Council, which held that the Chinese were guilty of pursuing the border conflict to a point of committing aggression, completely unmindful of the need of maintaining peaceful relations with a nonaligned country like India. In protest against this resolution Namboodiripad resigned from the National Council and his resignation was accepted.

Therefore, Namboodiripad had consistently opposed China being blamed or called the aggressor throughout the period of dispute between India and China from 1959 to 1962 and both during and after the Chinese aggression he had opposed the National Council's resolution condemning it. It is, therefore, unlikely that he would be writing an editorial for the *New Age* condemning the Chinese aggression or the cease-fire. As he was released a few days later there was nothing to prevent him from completing that article. I am not aware if the article did appear.

Nayar implies that Shastriji was unhappy at these arrests and proves this by saying that he started the release a few months later. But it was not Shastriji but Pandit Nehru who initiated the release of the detained Communist leaders. The first general release took place in Andhra during the Prime Minister's visit to Hyderabad in July, 1963. Both the President and the Home

Minister were unhappy about this release while the emergency was still continuing. How Shastriji felt about it is proved by the fact that in December, 1964, and early 1965, when Shastriji was the Prime Minister, a much larger number of pro-China communists were arrested and detained, though at that time there was no emergency of the type that existed in 1962-63.

Finally, Kuldip Nayar has made the astounding statement that "one thing regretted right up to the top is that Intelligence Department failed to give timely warning about the enemy's build-up. It is evident that the Chinese have been planning for the attack for many days. Had there been prior intimation the Army would have fared better". One would have expected better objectivity from a person of Nayar's great experience and knowledge. As the succeeding pages would show, the top in the administration never felt that there was any intelligence failure. A few at the bottom must have been indulging in this propaganda, but they had their own axes to grind. Their statements should have been taken with more discrimination. There had been, in fact, no intelligence failure but only failure on the part of those who had to act on the intelligence provided. This is a point which Mankekar has stressed in his book, *The Guilty Men of 1962*.

I now take up the last book in this series, i.e. *India's China War* written by Neville Maxwell, a British press correspondent, now turned a research scholar. Maxwell has found justification for practically everything that the Chinese said and did during the period 1950 to 1962 including their attack on India in that year. Most of his contentions have been refuted by writers who have better knowledge of these matters than he has. So I shall confine myself here only to some of his references to and allegations against the Intelligence Bureau. Even these allegations have been completely refuted by K. Subramanyam in his two articles in *The Hindustan Times* dated October 18 and 25, 1970.

Maxwell has used abuses and invectives against the IB and myself for which there is no justification. It is quite clear that having lent his ears to some professional traducers of the Intelligence Bureau, and lacking any solid ground, he had to take recourse to

abuses—a case of *argumentum baculinum*. And what reply can one give to abuses excepting abusing in return and this I am not prepared to do. And so I shall only reply to certain specific allegations that he has made with reference to the IB's handling of this China episode.

Maxwell says that after independence the Military Intelligence was allowed to wither and the Civil Intelligence grew at its expense. This is completely wrong. After independence, the MI was collecting military intelligence for several years and only as a result of the Himmatsinghji Committee's Report this responsibility was given to the IB in 1951 against my protest. The Committee had found that the MI's work in the field had been unsatisfactory. But this was only one part of the MI's work. The division which came as a result of this decision was that the IB was given the responsibility of collecting military intelligence in the field and the MI remained responsible for collation, interpretation and assessment of that intelligence. The MI had the further responsibility of disseminating the assessed intelligence to the field units and to ensure that it was properly assimilated by the field commanders. If Maxwell cares to find it out, he will see that this is the division of work between the Civil and the Military Intelligence even in his own country. If Military Intelligence withered according to Maxwell, it was not because the Civil Intelligence was given the responsibility of collecting military intelligence in the field but because of other reasons. But I would not say that the MI had withered. The British had departed without leaving any guidelines in the field of foreign and military intelligence. We all had our teething troubles. Just as we had our difficulties so had the MI.

Next Maxwell has made the astounding discovery that the IB consistently underestimated the strength of Chinese reaction to the acts of aggression or provocation by the Indian forces. This is as far from truth as night is from day. Anyone who reads this narrative would see that it was the IB which, right from the beginning, had taken the proper measure of Chinese intentions, preparations and strength and at no stage did the IB underestimate the threat from the Chinese. In fact, we had often been accused

of exaggerating the threat. We did not hear about this new charge till 1966. Uptill then the allegation levelled was to the effect that the IB had failed to give adequate intelligence. But after P.V.R. Rao and Mankekar had proved that the IB did in fact give adequate intelligence, the detractors of intelligence had to shift their sights and attack intelligence from a new angle. And hence a new charge has been rigged up and unfortunately Maxwell has allowed himself to be carried away by this propaganda.

At one place Maxwell says that we had reported that the Chinese border guards were troops of inferior quality. We never said this. In fact, in all our estimates we included the border guards in the regular Chinese Army. It was the Chinese Prime Minister who tried to make this distinction and according to him even the massive attack mounted on the Indian troops in October, 1962, was made by the border guards only.

Like several other research students who have found that in 1950 the Chinese Army came to Western Tibet through Aksai Chin, Maxwell has also arrived at the same truth. But what is the basis of this discovery? All these research students have based their conclusions on one single statement by Chou En-lai in 1960 that his troops entered Western Tibet by this route. He claimed this to prove that the Chinese had always controlled this part of Tibet. I have already shown that this statement was completely false.

Maxwell quotes Pathania to allege that the IB did not warn the army about the possibility of Chinese troops coming through Poshing La. I do not know if Pathania could have said this because facts were just the opposite. A look at Chapter 23 will prove this. Even supposing the IB gave a wrong assessment, did Pathania keep his eyes closed to the danger of the Chinese outflanking the Indian Army by using this route? It was a purely operational matter and I do not see how the IB comes into it.

Maxwell has alleged that in the matter of deployment of troops in November, 1962, the IB dictated to the army where they should be sent. I wish he had checked this statement from Gen. Thapar and Maj.-Gen. Dhillon before making it. This is of a piece with the rest of the fabrications.

Maxwell alleges that the IB forced the Army to occupy frontier posts which provoked the Chinese. Apparently he refers to the checkposts and the posts set up as a result of the Government's decision in November, 1961. The IB indicated the vacant areas and, after much mature deliberation, the Government decided that these vacant areas in our territory should be occupied either by opening posts or by effective patrolling. The CGS often consulted the IB about the siting of a particular post because the IB had better knowledge about these frontier areas. But the decision about the actual location was entirely that of the army. In fact, to this day I do not know what were the exact locations of the 43 posts that were set up by the army in Depsang plains and Chip Chap river valley in 1962. This was done by the local military commander who had to take into account many factors. We could not interfere in that decision. Probably Maxwell would have liked us not to open any checkposts at all in the territory to which the Chinese had laid even a most nebulous claim so that the Chinese could come and take over these areas.

Maxwell applauds Daulat Singh for having defied the Army Headquarters and moved reinforcement on his own authority to Ladakh because there was "intelligence" that the Chinese had also moved additional troops to Western Tibet. By slick manipulation of words he has tried to show that it was "military intelligence" obtained by Daulat Singh himself on which he acted though Maxwell has earlier alleged that the MI had withered. He might have had the courtesy to admit that it was military intelligence served by the IB to Daulat Singh on which the latter acted. But Daulat Singh was not doing it in defiance of the Army Headquarters; he was only carrying out its direction. Nearly half of the army is always under the Western Command and so Daulat Singh had the resources to pick out a battalion from here or there to re-inforce his frontier posts. In other theatres the Commanders did not have that scope for manoeuvring and so had to depend on the Army Headquarters for their needs.

Maxwell criticises the IB for having sent to the Army Headquarters some important information about the Chinese military reinforcement in the Tsona Sector (opposite Nyamkachu) without

proper assessment. Certainly a research scholar like Maxwell is expected to know that it was not the responsibility of the IB to make the assessment but that of the Army Headquarters. The latter must have accepted the authenticity of the information before sending it to the Corps Headquarters. As the information was found to be correct, where then did the IB default?

Maxwell has drawn such a sweet picture of China that one reputed writer A.J.P. Taylor has exclaimed: "In *Back to Methuselah*, Bernard Shaw foretold that the Chinese would one day run the world. If their behaviour as recounted in this book is any guide, there could be no better outcome for mankind". I would only advise Taylor and Maxwell that before they invite the Chinese to take over their beautiful country, they may consult the Tibetans to find out how it feels to be under Chinese rule.

I have thus exhausted the examination of all the specific charges which have so far been made against Intelligence with regard to the 1962 debacle. I shall now take up the question of the general allegations that were voiced at the time. This criticism was vociferous and persistent, being voiced in Parliament, in the press, in public meetings and had almost become a parlour talk. But there was little that we could do to meet this criticism, all of which was based on ignorance both of facts and of the division of responsibilities. We knew our facts and we knew that the criticisms were unfounded; but we did not want to be involved in controversies or to indulge in mud-slinging. Moreover, we could not have refuted these allegations without disclosing facts, which it was not in our power to do. So we read and heard the criticisms and we kept our own counsel. But sometimes even the worm turns. This happened when a Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting said in a public meeting in Delhi that Intelligence had failed. This exhausted my patience. The general public would not know that a Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting had no means of knowing, even in the slightest degree, what Intelligence had reported and if Intelligence had failed. But coming as it did from a member of the Government, people would naturally believe that he was talking with inside knowledge and would be perfectly entitled to believe his

statement. So I took up the matter with the Home Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri. He said that there was, in fact, a good deal of criticism even amongst the Members of Parliament and he had not quite made up his mind as to the line he would adopt to meet these criticisms. I also met the Prime Minister and told him that he knew that such criticisms were quite unjustified and in any case the Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting had no justification in making a public statement criticising another branch of the Government and I took strong exception to this irresponsible utterance. The Prime Minister took a serious view of it and said that it would not happen again; and it did not. When I reported this back to the Home Minister he was happy; but he informed me that there was a paper before the Cabinet from the Defence asking for the transfer of Military Intelligence from the IB and putting it under the Army Headquarters on the ground that the intelligence given had not been up to the mark. I excused myself for a few minutes, came to my room, took copies of the charts and statements which we had given to the Defence in the months of May to October, 1962, and lastly in November and gave these to the Home Minister and told him that these represented our estimates of the Chinese strength at various times and the various places and, if anything was found wrong in them, I would willingly give up my job. On the other hand, if these reports went unchallenged even after so much hind-sight had been acquired, then a public statement should be made exonerating Intelligence from all blame. The Home Minister was amazed at the details that we had given. I also informed the Home Minister that I would be only too glad to be relieved of the responsibility of Military Intelligence which had been thrust on me in 1951 against my wishes and despite my protests, which were based on my anticipation that at the first reverse which the army would suffer, all the guns would be turned against us and this had come true. So I would be happy if the Army Headquarters took over the entire responsibility of Military Intelligence henceforward. The Home Minister then asked me whether I would not meet the Defence Minister and tell him all this. I replied that the old Defence Minister had never complained about the lack of

intelligence; and the new Minister had not complained either, and I was sure that he would talk to me frankly since he had known me well for a long time. Therefore, I had not felt the need of raising the topic with him. The Home Minister then enquired if I had any objection to talk to the Defence Minister if he called the latter to a meeting in his room. To this I had no objection and the meeting was arranged for the following day.

When I arrived, Chavan was already there and Sri Shastri asked me to start the talk. Addressing the Defence Minister, I said that I understood that he was not satisfied with the working of the IB in the field of Military Intelligence and that he was thinking of setting up a new organisation, and I wanted to know what shortcomings in the working of the IB had come to his notice. Chavan promptly replied that he had no complaint against Intelligence which was doing its work well, and that, as he had known me for such a long time, if he had any complaint, instead of airing it behind my back, he would have talked over the matter personally with me. I was taken aback a little because I had gone prepared to hear some criticisms but Chavan in one sentence had reiterated his full confidence in the IB. I, however, took this opportunity to repeat to Chavan what I had told Shastri the previous day, i.e. the history behind the handing over of Military Intelligence to the IB. I told him that we had worked in very close liaison with the Army Headquarters and had always treated the DMI as well as the Directors of Air and Naval Intelligence as members of the same community and, though there might have been some differences of view in the assessment, we had worked in very close cooperation and had always considered ourselves as members of one unit. And never before the reverses had we heard a complaint that the Defence were not getting all that they wanted. So it was most unfortunate that such a propaganda had been set in motion now. Shastriji then asked me to show Chavan the papers which I had shown him the previous day, and I did; and Chavan also commented that when so much information was available he did not know what more could be expected. He then asked me whether I knew that there was a proposal by the Defence authorities to separate the Military Intelligence from the Intelli-

gence Bureau and set up an organisation under their own control. I said that I had heard of this the previous day from Shastriji. When he asked for my views, I said I had no objection, rather I would welcome it if Military Intelligence was separated; but I hoped that the Defence Minister would ensure that the new organisation which was to be set up would be able to discharge its responsibilities. I added that from our own experience of the work, we could inform him that it would take two decades to set up a new organisation to match what we had and probably after that a move would again be made to give it back to the IB. I said that this had been the experience of most of the countries and for this reason strategic Military Intelligence had remained with the Civil Intelligence Agencies everywhere. The Defence Minister then asked me whether I would agree to come and talk to his Chiefs of Staff. I said that I had no desire to do so on my own, but if he called me to any meeting I would come and give my views. I parted with a further assurance from the Defence Minister that he had the fullest confidence in the IB.

A few days later I was summoned by the Defence Minister and, when I arrived in his room, I found that the three Chiefs of Staff, General Choudhuri, Air Marshal Engineer, Admiral Katari, the new Defence Secretary, P.V.R. Rao, the Cabinet Secretary, S.S. Khera, and Additional Secretary, H. Sarin were present. I realised that I had been called about the matter which the DM had mentioned to me a few days earlier. The DM wanted the talk to be opened and P.V.R. Rao started it by saying that as they were not satisfied with the working of Intelligence, they had decided to set up a new Military Intelligence Organisation of their own under a foreign expert. I said that as P.V.R. Rao was not the Defence Secretary prior to December, 1962, he was not in a position to say what intelligence had been catered by the IB and what were its shortcomings. In order to effect any improvement to any organisation, one should know what were its weaknesses and I would like to be told what these were as seen from the eyes of the Defence. At this stage, Khera commented that on the contrary throughout the period, September to November, 1962, he had found that Intelligence had always been

up to the mark with its information which had been found to be correct and reliable and, therefore, any charge about the lack of intelligence was groundless. Sarin also supported Khera. The only other officer who used to be present in the previous Defence meetings, Air Marshal Engineer, said that whenever he had occasion to verify by aerial reconnaissance any information given by the IB about enemy build-up or constructions, he had found it to be correct.

With the main charge thus quashed, P.V.R. Rao enquired what objection there could be if Defence tried to set up their own intelligence-collecting machinery and brought an expert from outside for that purpose. To the first question I repeated what I had told the Defence Minister earlier that the Defence would be quite justified in setting up an organisation of their own and I for one would never object to it. But as regards the induction of a foreign expert, I said that as the DIB I had a right to know who was the foreign expert in view, because on this matter I might be able to give them some advice and it also raised an important question of security. As the Chief of Intelligence in India for the previous twelve years I knew of practically all important persons in the Intelligence field throughout the world and many of them personally, and particularly in the Anglo-American group of countries, from which probably the expert was due to come; so I might be able to advise on the person selected. The name of a retired Major-General of the British Army was then mentioned. I told the Defence Minister that I naturally knew a good deal about British Intelligence and the British Intelligence Officers, but this gentleman's name was not known in the Intelligence circles. If the Defence wanted to appoint him as the head of the Military Intelligence Organisation, they could do so, but there were many Major-Generals in India of the same or higher calibre and there was no need to go out of India for that purpose. I also pointed out that the Defence should realise that the Directorate of Military Intelligence dealt not only with Chinese intelligence but also with Pakistani intelligence, and asked if, when a foreigner headed the MI, the Defence would still expect the IB to cater Pakistani intelligence to the reorganised Directorate.

I further said that this was the first time that I had heard that in an independent country Military Intelligence was going to be headed by a national of another country which was patently more sympathetic to one of our two permanent enemies.

So far as I know, the separation of military intelligence from the IB and the appointment of a foreign expert to the projected new department ended there. I was later told by Khera that, when the subject had earlier come up for discussion at the Cabinet, the Prime Minister had said that he did not understand the justification of this demand at all. Wherever he had gone he had found that the Indian Intelligence was rated very high in foreign countries and several countries had sought its assistance to set up their own organisations. So he failed to understand how the situation could improve by bringing a foreigner to head the organisation when there were officers in the IB who were far superior to any such foreigner whose services could be secured. If anything was to be done, it should be done on the advice of the DIB. So this proposal was buried for ever. But the fact that it was ever seriously mooted illustrates to what absurdity blind prejudice can lead to. I must mention here that it is not an Indian phenomenon that Defence has tried to get control over the Intelligence Organisation. It has happened in every country some time or other. But all countries have found that an independent Intelligence Organisation is vital for the very existence of democracy.

Critics of the Intelligence Bureau may here ask: "Well, what about the Henderson-Brooke Report? Did not that report criticise some aspects of intelligence?" Probably it did. I have not seen the report; so I do not know what this esteemed gentleman had said. But as the Defence Minister explained in Parliament, Intelligence was not within the charter of Henderson-Brooke's enquiry. So if he did make some comments, he was clearly going beyond his charter—for reasons best known to him. All that we can say is that Henderson-Brooke never met the DIB nor any other Intelligence Officer, nor did he ask for any of the intelligence reports sent about the Chinese build-up during the period 1960-62. Even if he had done so we would not have given him any information. How was he qualified to talk about

Intelligence? Defence also did not consider it worthwhile to send a copy of the report or even an extract to the IB to correct any shortcomings if they existed. Apparently there was none.

However, after the submission of the Henderson-Brooke Report and the parliamentary debate in 1963, a study was undertaken by the Defence Secretary, P.V.R. Rao, of all reports which the IB had sent about Chinese preparations in 1962. Some criticisms had also been voiced against Intelligence during the Pakistani aggression in 1965 and the Defence and the Home Secretaries had jointly gone into these allegations to find out how far they were correct. P.V.R. Rao has recorded the result of these two investigations in the paper which he wrote on "Governmental Machinery for the Evolution of National Defence Policy and the Direction of War" in July, 1968 issue of the *Journal of the Indian Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis*. His conclusion was that "Both in 1962 and 1965, unfair allegations found currency regarding the inadequacy of existing Intelligence arrangements. Intelligence work is necessarily carried out in secrecy and it is of advantage to an efficient Intelligence Organisation that it does not hit the public eye. These very factors may provide on the one hand a cover in which inefficiency may flourish and on the other hand a convenient cloak to other agencies to ignore the Intelligence authority when it suits them and to cover up their mistakes by shifting the blame to the inadequacy of intelligence".*

Talking about the same subject, K. Subramanyam, Director, Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi, in a lecture on "India's Problem of Security" on July 10-11, 1969, said as follows: "Following the 1962 debacle there were charges in the country that our intelligence-collection machinery was at fault. Here again Shri P.V.R. Rao in his article referred to earlier had characterised these allegations as unfair. It may be noted that while the Defence Minister, the Chief of Army Staff, the Chief of the General Staff and many others had to pay a price for what happened in 1962, the Chief of Intelligence, Shri B.N. Mullik, was not only not taken to task but his term of services was extended". Subramanyam might have added that, even after his

*P.V.R. Rao has reiterated this view in his book, *Defence Without Drift*.

retirement from the post of Director of Intelligence, he was re-appointed by the new Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1965 to the post of Director-General of Security. These statements by two independent officers of the Defence Ministry, who had taken the trouble to scrutinise and analyse all the reports which the IB had sent during the year 1962 and also even later about Pakistan, should silence any further criticism about the alleged failure of Intelligence.

But I may add something more here. In any matter of military intelligence there are really three persons or authorities who get the intelligence and are in a position to pass an opinion on its adequacy or shortfalls. The first is the Defence to which all the raw as well as the assessed material goes and it would be in the best position to judge. The second to receive the intelligence is the Prime Minister to whom all the assessed material goes. He as well as the Defence Minister are also personally briefed by the DIB. The third is the Home Minister to whom a good deal, though not all, of military intelligence goes because an external threat naturally causes repercussions in the country. We have seen what the Defence Minister and the Defence Secretary, as the head of the Defence Establishment, had to say about the matter. Let us see what the Home Minister said. His most authoritative statement would naturally be in Parliament. Replying to the debate in the Rajya Sabha on December 8, 1962, on the question of Intelligence, this is what Shri Shastri said: "Something was said about our Intelligence. Only one or two Members mentioned it, and it was said that our Intelligence was weak. Of course, I am not prepared to claim that our Intelligence is perfect or there is nothing more to be done about it. Yet I can say with some authority that our Intelligence in so far as this situation, the Indo-China trouble, is concerned, and especially in regard to what happened since September 8 and even a little before that is concerned, has on the whole worked and functioned well. I had never seen their charts before, nor did I want to do so, because intelligence is intelligence. It has, as far as possible, to be kept secret—the details of it—even from the Minister. What the Intelligence has to do is to make its own assessment and place the

assessment before the Minister for taking policy decisions. I do not want myself to go into details. Of course, whenever I want to do it I can do so. But the general practice is—and I think it is a sound and good practice—that the intelligence obtained by the Intelligence Department should be restricted, that information should be restricted or confined to the minimum number of officers, possibly one officer or may be two, but not more than that. But recently after I heard the speeches here and the speeches in the Lok Sabha, I asked the officers concerned to place certain information before me—their charts, their assessments, their facts and figures and details—and I can say with some confidence that I was really amazed to know what details they had in their possession. So it is not quite justified to criticise our Intelligence wholesale. But I am prepared to tell the House that we want to make it more efficient and more effective. Whatever reorganisation is possible it has to be done, both in regard to Military and Civil intelligence."

So the Home Minister has also spoken and it should silence any further speculation. Sri Shastri pin-pointed the fact I had stressed at the very beginning of this chapter that there are and can be very few people at the receiving end of intelligence who are therefore competent to pass a judgment on it.

Let us now see what the third recipient, and the most important of all, i.e. the Prime Minister, had to say about it. Replying to the debate in the Lok Sabha on December 10, the Prime Minister said: "Some reference was made to Intelligence. It is difficult to judge Intelligence; but I think that on the whole our Intelligence has been first class". When a Member interjected, the Prime Minister remarked that he happened to know more about what had happened at different places, and it was difficult to argue with people who criticised out of ignorance. He went on to say, "I am speaking from my experience, which happens to be better about this matter. Of course, we do not compare our Intelligence system with those of the great countries with vast networks all over. Naturally they spend more on their Intelligence than the whole of the annual revenue of India. We cannot do that; we do not wish to do that, spend all our money in that way. But

considering our resources, our Intelligence is good."

I could end this narrative here. But having said all this, I would not be true to myself if I claimed that Intelligence was perfect in every respect. In fact, no Intelligence Organisation can claim to be so, not even the most expensive one which spends more on intelligence collection than the total Indian revenue. In some earlier chapters I have detailed the handicaps from which we were suffering before October, 1962. The most serious handicap was in the field of communication because we lacked wireless sets suitable for high and cold mountainous territories. This delayed the intelligence collected at the frontier posts reaching the headquarters. Our monitoring organisation was also in the process of being set up and here also we suffered for want of suitable and sensitive equipment which was available only in foreign countries and required the expenditure of large foreign exchange which was scarce at that time. We were still expanding our Chinese-knowing staff and the total output of our own school as well as the Defence Languages school was not enough to catch up with the flow of material that came in even through our not too strong monitoring organisation. All these processes are time-consuming and cannot be built up in a few days or few months or even in the course of two or three years. To make a man proficient in Chinese alone requires a minimum of five years' wholetime study, and he must stay for at least two years in a Chinese-speaking country. To make a good monitor it takes at least three years and it is after that period that an educated technician can distinguish between the different tones and sounds coming over the wireless. And unless one has a good musical ear, one can never reach that efficiency. We were not yet able fully to assess the logistic capability or shortcomings of the enemy. Of course, this was not our responsibility but that of the DMI but as that Directorate was not yet able to do it we had to take on this task.

Thanks to the assistance given by Britain and the USA and the release of foreign exchange after 1962, the shortcomings in communications have been largely overcome. More Chinese-knowing officers are available now. Our ability to estimate the various threats has also increased. In the seven intervening years there

has been a fair expansion of the organisation on the ground. Other organisations have been set up (see Chapter 26) and these will greatly assist Intelligence both in peace and war. So the promises given by Sri Shastri in Parliament in 1962 have been fulfilled. Intelligence faced the Pakistani challenge in 1965 with confidence and can be relied upon to discharge its responsibilities adequately in any future danger confronting the country.

In conclusion, I would like to make one point clear. In replying to some of the criticisms, which have been published in books written by different authors, I have only tried to clear certain misunderstandings which had been caused due to incomplete information at the disposal of the writers. I have not tried to defend myself or the Intelligence Bureau. The DIB should never have anything to explain. He must ever stand self-explained. If at any time the contingency arises that the DIB has to explain his conduct, he must quit. That contingency did not arise during the long years I was India's Chief of Intelligence.

28 Defence Forces

INDIA'S SHARE of the pre-independence Indian Army of 5,00,000 roughly amounted to about 2,80,000. All the mixed battalions had generally been stripped of their Muslim personnel who had migrated to Pakistan. Immediately after the partition, whilst the Army was still engaged in a big way to fight the communal holocaust in Punjab and other places, the Kashmir war was thrust upon it. This was at first a fight with the tribals, for which the Indian Army had been well trained, and later against units of the Pakistani Army, which till lately were parts of the Indian Army and so were similarly trained and equipped. India had at this time good officers in Kashmir of whom mention may be made of Major-Generals Kulwant Singh and Thimayya, who led the troops well and saved most of Jammu and Kashmir from occupation by Pakistani troops and irregulars.

Cariappa, who was the first Indian Chief of Army Staff, did good service to the army in patterning it after the British and making it non-political and giving it a character. He also organised the non-denominational Guards Battalions with the aim of national integration. In his time the morale of the troops and the officers continued to be high. After him came Generals Rajinder Singhji and Srinagesh. Though some critics have alleged that during their time the Army went into somnolence, this is not correct. During these years, the general stress rightly was on the country's economic development and the army, as a part of the Indian population, understood the implications of this; because, if full economic benefits were not made available to the masses early enough in an appreciable measure, it would be impossible for the Government to justify its existence in a democracy. The Army was a part of the democracy and, under correct leadership, it was willing to play its proper role

and make the necessary sacrifices. It was a small but good and well-knit Army and both officers and men were willing to play their part in upholding democracy and helping its economic development. No doubt much of its equipment dated from World War II, but they were effective against the only enemy then in sight, i.e. Pakistan, whose Army was also similarly equipped. But even then improvements were sought to be made in whatever directions it was considered necessary and possible. This period saw the acquistion of Sherman tanks and the RCL guns. The Bharat Electronics workshop was set up in the public sector to provide the Army with modern tele-communication equipment and several other defence industries were expanded. A new Training Institute was set up at Khadakvasala to give a new orientation to the training of armed forces officers, and at Jodhpur and Secunderabad new Training Centres for the Air Force were started. Hunters and Mysteres were purchased to increase the striking power of the Air Force. A licence was obtained to produce Gnat fighters. Some fighting ships were also acquired for the Navy. So the allegation that has been made that the armed forces went to seed at this time was not correct. Actually the armed forces kept in touch with the current national aspirations and so trimmed their own requirements and kept their demands low so as not to cast an undue burden on the Indian economy. Against the only enemy, i.e. Pakistan, the Indian armed forces continued to maintain superiority both in numbers as well as in equipment and also leadership and was more than adequate to meet any challenge from that quarter. So far as the other possible enemy, i.e. China, was concerned, diplomatic entente had been established after the signing of the Trade Agreement in 1954 and there was at least on the surface no sign of serious disagreement which could lead to a situation of war between the two countries. So no Defence Minister or Chief of Army Staff could during these years ask with any amount of conviction for any appreciable rise in the defence expenditure.

It is all right to say now that we should have used this period of interregnum to build up our armed forces to match the Chinese; but it is forgotten that during precisely this period there was

a continuous demand from the opposition in Parliament as well as from the Congress MPs for further reduction in the defence expenditure so that more resources could be employed for the economic development of the country. Any large increase in defence expenditure, as was later undertaken after 1960 and specially after 1962, was neither justifiable nor possible up to the mid-fifties. Even the Defence Forces themselves did not ask for it as they were fully attuned to the political aim of the government to secure for the country early economic advancement, the benefits of which would go to the members of the armed forces as well.

Khera has pointed out that during this period, except when Gopalaswamy Iyengar was the Defence Minister for a short time, India had Defence Ministers who did not carry much weight either with the party or with the Government. Even if this were correct, there were very competent Secretaries, Patel and Vellodi, who could make up for any deficiency. But it is doubtful whether the situation would have been very different even if there had been forceful Defence Ministers, so far as any radical increase in the strength of the armed forces was concerned. But it is possible that an earlier start could have been made to make India self-sufficient in the supply of arms. As against this, the fact remains that in those days there were no internecine disputes in the Defence Forces except minor ones which exist all times. There was also no real difference of opinion between the Services and the Defence Minister or between the Defence Minister and his Cabinet colleagues. All these factors helped in building up a good defence force, whose morale was high. That was all what was necessary at that time. India had no aggressive intentions against any one. She required only enough forces to defend her territory against possible aggressors—and the only country with inimical designs which India had to face at that time was Pakistan.

However, the Pakistan-United States Mutual Aid Pact in pursuance of which the USA agreed to supply free to Pakistan a considerable amount of modern military equipment brought about a new dimension to India's defence preparations. A blue-

print of the MDAP (Military Defence Aid Pact) was secured by the IB in 1956 and shown to the Prime Minister and given to the Army Headquarters. It was clear from this document that due to the munificence of the United States, the Pakistani Army, in the course of the next five years, would be able to outstrip its Indian counterpart in armour, artillery and other forms of heavy equipment and, though it would still be numerically smaller, with its better equipment it would be able to face the Indian Army on terms of equality on the plains of Punjab. The Prime Minister realised that the pace of reorganisation and expansion of the Defence Forces required to be considerably speeded up to be able to meet the new danger arising out of American aid to Pakistan. Though America had assured India that this aid was really aimed at building up Pakistan's defence against Soviet Russia and China, no one in India had the slightest doubt that the Pakistanis would turn the guns, given to them in good faith by their friends, against India at the very first opportunity, and then the Americans would not be able to check them; a suspicion which turned into reality in 1965. So the need was to infuse in the Defence Forces a new sense of urgency to match its strength with the rapidly growing Pakistani army. This needed improvement and expansions both in the Army and the Air Force as well as in the Navy and providing them with better equipment. More dynamism was also required in stepping up India's defence production.

At this juncture, the Prime Minister brought in as the Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Thimayya, the most colourful General India has so far produced, who had distinguished himself in operations both in Burma and in Kashmir. He had also served as the Head of the Neutral Nations' Repatriation Force in Korea. The Prime Minister also brought in Krishna Menon as the new Defence Minister. It was hoped that between Krishna Menon and Thimayya, both persons of ability and dynamism, they would be able quickly to bring about the required improvements in the Army and in the defence production to meet the new threat posed by Pakistan. Also a suspicion about Chinese intentions must have been lurking in the Prime Minister's mind though China was still professing eternal friendship with India. This combination was

welcomed in the Defence services as a precursor to a new dynamic period.

As was expected of him, Krishna Menon showed tremendous drive and tried to rig up the old defence industries and modernise them and for the first time a concerted effort was started to make India, as far as possible, self-sufficient in the supply of arms and ammunition and all forms of military equipment. And his performance in that direction was most creditable. It is often overlooked that many of the Indian-made modern weapons with which the Indian armed forces are now equipped are the products of factories set up at the instance of the new Defence Minister. The industries now producing the Shaktiman trucks, the Jonga jeeps, the Nissan one-ton trucks, the L-70 anti-aircraft guns, the 106 RCL guns, the 7.62 semi-automatic rifles, the Brandt heavy mortars, the mountain guns, the Vijayanta tanks, with which the Indian Army is now adequately equipped, were all set up by Krishna Menon. He started several new factories and re-vamped the old ones to produce these weapons. In the Air Force also, he was responsible for encouraging the development of the HF-24 supersonic fighter and the production of AVRO 748 transport plane and MIG-21 intercepter fighter with Russian collaboration. The Mazagaon Docks, which is now producing frigates was also acquired in his time and the Garden Reach Docks were expanded. Krishna Menon also reorganised the Research and Development Wing of the Defence and for the first time brought a modern outlook in the Defence Services.

If quick results were not achieved in these enterprises it was due to a number of factors which were beyond Krishna Menon's control. It was difficult to develop defence industries quickly because of the low technological level in the country and the absence of such basic industries as metal producing, metal shaping, machine tool and chemical industries. So long as the latter were not developed in the country, India would have to get them from foreign markets at considerable cost. If foreign collaboration were sought, in case of defence industry producing weapons, this was not easily available, and even if it was, there had to be a considerable amount of initial purchase and this would leave a

balance the production of which would be uneconomical.* But Krishna Menon solved these difficulties, one after another, depending on as much local ingenuity as possible and using mostly local material. It is unfortunate that, due to the prejudice which subsequently developed against him, the fact that under his stewardship the defence industries took a big leap forward has not received enough recognition.

But in another direction Krishna Menon was less successful. When he tried to look into the organisation of the Defence Services, no doubt with the honest intention of modernising it and freeing it from old British traditions which could no longer hold good, he met with resistance. Nurtured in the old traditions of the British Indian Army, when the Commander-in-Chief was the Head of all the three Services and was second only to the Viceroy, the Service Chiefs, particularly the Chief of Army Staff, did not like any interference with the administration of the Defence Services or even with the Defence policy. According to the Constitution, the President was the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and they would have preferred to work directly under the President; but, in the changed political circumstances, when the most important functionary was the Prime Minister, they would rather be directly under him. During the short periods when Pandit Nehru functioned as the Defence Minister as a stop-gap arrangement, the Defence Services were happy. Not only was Pandit Nehru a delightful boss to work under but the Service ego to work under the top person only was also satisfied. But this could not be a permanent arrangement and there had to be a Defence Minister and the Services had to accept the position. But so long as the Defence Minister left the Services to themselves, they were contented. This is what generally had happened during the first decade after independence. It is not suggested that due to the want of any effective control by the Defence Minister, the Services were going the wrong way; they were going in the right direction in their own light and with their own estimate of the threat, etc. and they would have liked that position

* Quoted from a paper entitled "India's Problem of Security" by K. Subramanyam, Director, Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis.

to continue with as little civilian control as possible, with the Secretaries working merely to process the demands of the Services through other departments. But with a dynamic person like Krishna Menon, interposed between the Services and the Prime Minister, this was no longer possible. With him in the chair of the Defence Minister, the civilian control was complete. As Khera has remarked, there was a good deal of initial enthusiasm in the Defence Services when Krishna Menon became their Minister. Hopes were roused that at last the needs of the Services would receive proper attention. And in fact, in Krishna Menon's time many improvements were done in the service and even the pension conditions of all ranks were improved and much effort was spent on amenities like housing, medical facilities, etc. Much more was done during this period than during the previous decade. But all this was taken for granted. These were the dues of the Services and the Minister had done nothing more than to secure them belatedly. So Krishna Menon got no thanks for bringing about a marked improvement in the service conditions of the Armed Forces.

In spite of his solid achievements in this direction, the initial enthusiasm of having Krishna Menon as the Defence Minister soon wore away; and when he tried to go deeper into the workings of the Defence Services, particularly the Army, he met with opposition. Unfortunately, Krishna Menon's method of work and man management was not such as would appeal to the disciplined minds of the Defence Services, used to the strict observance of protocol and rules, if not in the spirit at least in the letter. But Krishna Menon could not be fastened down by sterile rules, and sensing opposition of the Services to his working methods, he also became contemptuous of theirs. He also had another habit of calling the Chiefs of Staff for consultation at all hours of the day and even in the evening, and often they had to wait in his ante-room whilst he was disposing of an earlier visitor. This the Service Chiefs resented. They expected and deserved better treatment from the Minister. They certainly were available for consultations but they could not be at the Defence Minister's beck and call day and night. Their sense of dignity was offended.

It was this psychological difference and not any difference of opinion on any defence policy or any administrative matter that led Thimayya to tender his resignation in September, 1958. This was unfortunate, because it is known that, though Krishna Menon used to be rough with the other two Chiefs, he had always tried to carry the Army Chief with him. The other two Chiefs were also expected to follow suit, but they did not and instead disapproved of Thimayya's hasty action. The resignation was ill-timed, the day before President Ayub was making a stop-over at Palam to meet the Prime Minister; and in fact at least one newspaper carried the news of this resignation in headlines in the morning when Ayub arrived. The Prime Minister was in anguish. He trusted both Krishna Menon and Thimayya. Both were his favourites and it was unfortunate that instead of working together for the country's good they had fallen out. He persuaded Thimayya to withdraw his resignation, which Thimayya did. The explanation which Thimayya gave to his civilian friends was that Krishna Menon was too clever for him and used to leave him confused every time he met him, and so he felt that he could not work with him any more. This explanation might sound too simple but is more true than many other conjectures. At his best, Krishna Menon was a difficult person to work with. At his worst, he was devastating. His intelligence was so overpowering and memory so prodigious, and in a short time he had acquired such a mastery of the details of the departments under him, that no bluff could escape him. And woe to the person who had tried to throw dust or had come with not too well-prepared a case. Menon's vitriolic comments would freeze him. And the higher the rank, the sharper became his tongue. So Thimayya's complaint that his Minister always left him numb was basically true. Did not Krishna Menon regularly floor the mightiest of opponents in the United Nations? What chance could then a Serviceman—Civilian or Military—have against him? Yet, if one could get to know him well, one could see his kind heart under this forbidding exterior. Few could do this, but still there were some for whom Krishna Menon had high respect and whose opinion or advice he would not lightly ignore. However, wherever the fault lay,

this resulted in Krishna Menon and Thimayya falling out—the two from whom so much had been expected for the improvement and the strengthening of the Defence Services.

This dispute, unfortunately, came at a most crucial period. India could no longer remain content with the military superiority over Pakistan which she had inherited at the time of the partition and which she had maintained till 1957. Pakistan was rearming herself feverishly with American assistance and, unless India took immediate steps to further strengthen herself, Pakistan would soon be a match for her. On the other hand, the period of friendship with our northern neighbour was also coming to an end and the danger that China might ultimately pose was clearly looming in the horizon. This was the time when the entire strategic concept of the defence of the country had to be changed, new estimates of the threat had to be prepared and a new turn had to be given with a time limit to improve and strengthen the armed forces to meet the twin threat. And here we had an Army Chief and a Defence Minister, who were both capable of doing it. But instead of pooling their knowledge and experience and uniting their energies to take the country in a new direction in the matter of defence and foreign policy which was associated with it, the two, on whom the Prime Minister had depended so much, fell out and thereafter nothing could go right between them. This quarrel harmed both of them and wrought incalculable harm to the Services and the country. Thimayya no longer was the great leader in the Armed Forces. Though his reputation with the troops still remained high, his stock with the officers fell and they could no longer take his word and act on it. He must have felt the incongruity of his position and gradually lost interest in his work and stayed only to serve out his term.

The dispute did not leave Krishna Menon unscathed. His appointment as the Defence Minister had never been looked upon with favour by the conservative sections of the party and his dispute with Thimayya gave grist to his critics' mill. In the Cabinet also he lost his stature. After all, if a Defence Minister drives the Army Chief to desperation, there must be something wrong with him; and even with the undoubted support which the Prime

Minister continued to extend to him, as mentioned by Khera, it became increasingly difficult for his Ministry to process its schemes through various other Ministries and particularly Finance. On the one hand Krishna Menon met with opposition from the Army Headquarters to practically everything he proposed, and on the other he continuously faced opposition from other Ministries when he wanted to proceed with his schemes. The Defence Industries, which at that time should have moved with great speed, could not do so because there was no liaison amongst the various persons or units which were deeply concerned in the process, that is the Defence Minister, the Army Chief, the Director of Production, the Scientific Expert, etc., with the result that even the simple 7·62 semi-automatic rifle took nearly two years to get the approval of the Army Headquarters and was not yet in the production line when the Chinese attack came.

Even when the responsibility of the defence of the northern border was handed over to the Army after the shooting by the Chinese of the Indian policemen at Kongka La in October, 1959, a few hesitant steps only were taken to move the Army forward, to strengthen the Air Force's transport wing and to improve the army's striking power. Many of the schemes emanating from the Defence Minister were dubbed as playthings by the Army Headquarters and during this period, unfortunately, a dialogue seemed to have started between certain disgruntled army officers and some politicians with the result that disparaging remarks were made about Krishna Menon's efforts to make the country self-sufficient in Defence production. Small faults were exaggerated and aired in the public while the bigger jobs accomplished remained unnoticed. Deprived of the cooperation of the Army Headquarters, Krishna Menon was forced to utilise junior officers for getting information and this again was resented by the Army as it was against all codes of discipline. It would not be correct to conclude from this that the Defence Minister was deliberately fostering indiscipline in the Armed Forces. Far from it, what he really wanted was to cut red-tape. If he wanted some information about a project, he would like to go direct to the officer who had it, irrespective of

his rank, instead of going through the normal hierarchy which would take a long time to produce the information and even then the correct information might not come as it was sure to be tainted by opinions expressed at the various levels through which it had to pass. (I remember Krishna Menon asking me several times whether he had no right to consult any officer he thought proper and whether I would object if he sent for my Deputies for any consultation. I replied that I would not mind because my Deputies would come back and correctly report the discussions and take my advice. Indeed in the IB we encouraged the Deputy and the Assistant Directors to report direct to the Government on subjects under their control and take part in discussions and take decisions—keeping the Director informed. But the IB did not work in the same way as other departments normally did and so could not be taken as setting the normal pattern. So it would be better if in consultation with the Service Chiefs he could lay down a pattern by which red-tape could be eliminated and yet the formality of discipline could be maintained.) But this question continued to be a live one for a long-time and naturally did not serve to improve Krishna Menon's relations with the Service Chiefs. The publication of letters sent by some disgruntled army officers containing allegations against him, of which some echoes were heard even in Parliament, deepened his suspicions that some senior army officers were working for his downfall. He called them American stooges and they in their turn called him a "commie" (Communist). So this was a disturbing period in the Army Headquarters and over two years of valuable time in a very crucial period of India's history were lost in these wrangles in the Services, in the Defence Ministry, between the Services and the Minister, between the Defence Ministry and Finance and an opposition was gradually built up against the Defence Minister even in the Congress Party in Parliament.

It may now be argued that it would have been far better if the Prime Minister had accepted Thimayya's resignation when it was offered, and brought in another Army Chief to allow smooth working in the Defence Ministry. But the Prime Minister was reluctant to part with either—both brilliant in their respective

ways and on both of whom he depended a great deal. Moreover, whoever was brought in as the Army Chief would have immediately encountered frowns from the officers' cadre and would have been dubbed as Krishna Menon's stooge. So, it is doubtful if any radical improvement could have been achieved that way.

This period of inactivity, mutual suspicion and uncertainty ended in April, 1961, when Thimayya retired on the completion of his term. Thapar then became the COAS. Kaul had been appointed the CGS earlier.* There was much misinformed criticism at the time about these two appointments. But there was nothing wrong nor was there any violation of rules or precedents in these promotions or postings. Thapar was the seniormost Lieutenant-General and with a good record of service. It would have been difficult and unfair to supersede him, though Thorat, the number two in the list, was certainly a more fancied candidate.** But more than this, the appointment criticised was of Lt.-Gen. Kaul as the CGS, an important appointment in the army in those days. Whatever might have been the considerations behind this appointment, the fact, however, stands out that Kaul, who had already proved himself a successful Quarter Master-General, soon made himself felt as the CGS. Comparisons are always odious, but in this post, he could be placed in the same class as two other outstanding officers who had held this post earlier, i.e. Kulwant Singh and Choudhury. Moreover, neither Thapar nor Kaul were stooges of the Defence Minister. Thapar had earned his promotion in his own right. Kaul, though chosen by the Minister, had earlier proved to be a very capable Quarter Master-General. So there was really no reason to dub them as stooges; but suspicions die hard in the Army and anything that Krishna Menon would do would be suspect in the eyes of a section of the officers. But, whatever were the merits of these two officers, this arrangement did not go well in the higher echelons of the Army and in consequence the hierarchy got divided into pro- and anti-Kaul groups.

* Kaul had been appointed CGS about two months before Thimayya's retirement.

** The same procedure has been followed in all subsequent appointments of the Army Chief and has evoked no criticism.

Both Thapar and Kaul had the political sense to realise the various internal and external pressures working against the country and the need to shape the Army to meet them. They brought about a new atmosphere at the Army Headquarters and things started moving. Steps were taken to move forward troops to meet Chinese threats. Schemes for the expansion of the Army were mooted. But much time had already been lost and it was now impossible to catch up with the fast-moving events.

Both these officers were very much exercised about the lack of equipment in the army. They did not seem to be particularly impressed by Krishna Menon's efforts to produce the equipment in India. The latter was quite right in trying to produce the largest number of items within the country, because, with his keen sense of the pressures of international politics, he knew clearly that if India depended only on foreign supplies, a sudden gap would be created at a crucial moment, when India might be fighting a war, in order to force her to follow the desires of the big powers. The countries on which India would depend for her supplies in this case were America and Britain. Therefore, Krishna Menon tried to diversify the sources of supply by making purchases from other countries, such as France and particularly from Russia. But because he procured the MI-4 helicopters and AN-12 transport planes from Russia and subsequently entered into a contract with that country for MIG fighters, suspicions were fanned that he had closed his eyes to supplies from other sources, overlooking the fact that the same Krishna Menon had obtained a fair supply of C-119 planes and many other items of equipment from the USA. He contracted with the British Metropolitan Vickers for manufacturing Vijayanta tanks in India and also arranged for the production of AVRO-748 transport plane on a licence from Great Britain. It is true that many of the defence industries, which he had initiated, had not started production by October, 1962; but for this Krishna Menon was not to blame. As Khera has pointed out, his political position was such that, in spite of the undoubted backing of Pandit Nehru, he cut little ice with the Finance Ministry and many of his production schedules were delayed because of want of finances. No newly set-up industry

starts producing with cent per cent capacity and efficiency from the very beginning. It takes some time for the production to be standardised and get into full swing. But the Finance insisted that there should be no experimentation and the production must be first class and up to the installed capacity from the very beginning. Moreover, expenditure on procuring raw materials could be incurred only against orders received and not against anticipated demands. He found it difficult to get firm orders because the Army would not easily approve of these new products. Even in case of such a quality vehicle like the Shaktiman, Krishna Menon had to beg for police orders as his production would otherwise come to a standstill. On at least one occasion Krishna Menon had even tendered his resignation to the Prime Minister complaining that his work was being hampered. Of course, the Finance Ministry had to exercise proper control and scrutiny because of the need to keep non-developmental expenditure down to the minimum. Opening of the purse-strings came only after the 1962 debacle.

Naturally as the defence industries were not progressing rapidly enough, the army could not wait indefinitely for its arms to come from that source, and, therefore, there was a great demand to buy arms from abroad at least to match the Pakistani armaments. After Chester Bowles's meeting with Kaul in February, 1962, in which he might have held out hopes of America meeting India's armament requirements, the Army Headquarters put up its demands for the purchase of equipment from that country. This proposal did not find favour with Krishna Menon. How far it was psychological because of his own dislike of the American ways and how far it was due to a fear that American supply would be unstable is difficult to say. Moreover, he had correctly assessed that the Americans were not in a position to supply much of India's requirements and would not do anything which might offend Pakistan. That he was right was more than amply proved when after 1962 India did go to the American market for arms supply and got very little. There was another important reason why Menon would not readily agree to purchase such arms from abroad as could be produced in the country.

He apprehended that once the gates for foreign purchase were opened, the Army would stop projecting any orders to his Defence Industries as they would always prefer sophisticated foreign weapons of proved quality to less sophisticated though more rugged weapons of Indian manufacture whose quality had not yet been tested. Unfortunately, in this country there is a tendency to consider every foreign manufacture to be of better quality than the corresponding product of local industries. Also when money had to be spent for purchasing foreign arms, Finance would be still more reluctant to release funds for developing defence industries. These apprehensions were not imaginary. There was substance in them. It was only after 1962, when, even after the Chinese invasion, the flow of foreign arms was found to be too tardy and fell far short of the projected demands and specially after 1965 when even that supply was stopped, that the Defence Services realised the utmost need of building up Defence Industries in India to cater to most of the needs of the Defence. But the result of this difference of opinion between the Army Headquarters and the Defence Minister and the Defence and the Finance Ministries was that neither the required arms were purchased from abroad nor did the Defence Industries progress fast enough to make India self-sufficient and this left the Army short of many items of equipment.

Kaul has mentioned my presence in one of the meetings of the Secretaries in which he had projected the Army's requirements of foreign exchange for the purchase of military hardware. This was sometime in June, 1962. I was invited to the meeting apparently on Kaul's suggestion to support his case, because he had talked to me earlier on more than one occasion about the shortage of equipment. On his request I had even raised this question with the Prime Minister, who had told me to mention it to the Defence Minister. He further said that army's projections were generally too high and the Defence Minister would be able to size them up properly. When I had raised the topic with the Defence Minister he had also expressed the apprehensions mentioned above. At the meeting, I supported Kaul's case, though I had not realised that his demand would total up to about six hundred crores,

all of which would be in foreign exchange. One serious defect in Kaul's demand was that it had no relation to the threat from the north and it was clear that the statement of requirements had been prepared on an *ad hoc* basis and not to meet specific needs. But both the Secretary-General, M.J. Desai, and the Finance Secretary, Bhoothalingam, were most sympathetic. M.J. Desai said that the Army must be given its requirements and if it could not be done, then the External Affairs would continue the dialogue with the two enemies and try to compromise. Bhoothalingam said that as the Army's demand would cut deeply into the country's requirements of foreign exchange for the Five-Year Plan, he would have to take this up with his Minister and this had to be placed before the Cabinet as a major change in the budget structure would be necessary. But as all the purchases could not be possibly made within that financial year or within two years, he would suggest that the requirements should be phased so that a proper allocation of foreign exchange year by year could be made. We dispersed with a feeling that things would soon move.

Subsequently, apparently the Service Chiefs felt that it would be "infra-dig" on their part to show their demands to a Secretaries' Committee; and at the next meeting Kaul had nothing to say excepting that the demands had been sent to the Defence Minister. This was an unfortunate sequel to a very promising process which Kaul had initiated and in which he had gained the support of two important Secretaries. What happened to the demands in the Defence Ministry is not known to me. Kaul has mentioned in his book that there was no response. Judging from the nature of demands which Kaul had made at the meeting of the Secretaries, I would say that even the demand which was sent to the Defence Minister must have been purely an arithmetical exercise and no detailed thought had been given to the realities of the situation and was not related to the threats that were developing against India. This is also corroborated by J.K. Galbraith in his book, *Ambassador's Journal*. He found it difficult to get a realistic estimate of the Army requirements which the USA was expected to supply. Moreover, as K. Subramanyam, Director, Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, has pointed out: "Even if all of

Kaul's demands had been agreed to in June, 1962, none of the items could have been available when the Chinese attacked India in October, 1962, because the time-lag between the release of the finance and the actual arrival of the weapons from foreign countries often was to the extent of two to three years; and then the troops had to be trained in new weapons and they had to be transported to the hilly areas". So Kaul's lament that if he had been heard when he had projected his demands in June, 1962, things might have been different only confuses the issue. If India had to be prepared to face the Chinese in 1962, she should have started getting ready from 1958. Hence the period 1958 to 1962 was vital—a period that was lost due to the Thimayya episode mentioned earlier.

Kaul has also mentioned about his opposition to the agreement about the MIG-21 aircraft. It was true that Kaul had opposed this, but on most inadequate information. So had I; but I had to correct myself. We had reported that Pakistan was going to get a squadron or two of F-104A supersonic fighters from the USA. It was necessary that India possessed aircraft of comparable capability. When Air Vice-Marshal Harjinder Singh returned from Moscow after his mission to judge the suitability of MIG-21 for the IAF, he came to inform me of his utter disapproval of this plane, which according to him was inferior to the American F-104A. When I asked him why he did not mention this in his report, he said he was afraid of offending Krishna Menon. I then asked him why the Air Headquarters was not making a joint front against the plane if it was so bad, Harjinder replied that the Air Headquarters might not support him. He wanted me to represent the facts to the Prime Minister without mentioning his name; otherwise there would be a national disaster. He insisted on my doing so, even when I pleaded that I could not interfere in this matter. So I took him to Sri Shastri, thinking that the latter, if he thought proper, might take the matter up with the Prime Minister or in the Defence Committee. Sri Shastri heard everything and, when Harjinder left, asked me to tell the Prime Minister about these apprehensions. He said that he himself did not understand the differences between the various planes and in

the Defence Committee he would not like to interfere in a colleague's decision, and as I understood the technical details, I would be able to explain them to the Prime Minister. That evening I saw Pandit Nehru and told him about the misgivings in the Air Force about the MIG aircraft and enquired whether he had looked into the matter personally. The Prime Minister said that the subject was in the negotiating stage and I should go and tell the Defence Minister all the doubts that had been expressed.

So next day I went to see Krishna Menon. In the ante-room, I met Air Marshal Engineer and asked him what was this ballyhoo about the MIG plane. Engineer deflated me completely and said that the MIG-21 was a good plane suitable for Indian conditions and was of the same class as F-104A. (Actually MIG-21 was superior to F-104A which Pakistan was getting and was of the same class as F-104G or K which the USA was then developing.) Its drawbacks were that it had a shorter range and was not fitted with all-weather radar. Another delegation was being sent under A.V.M. Pinto with which the Scientific Adviser would be associated and if Russia could make the changes suggested by the IAF, there would be no objection to purchasing this plane for his Air Force. So when I went in to see Krishna Menon, I merely told him that I had heard some disparaging talk about the MIG-21 and wondered whether he had heard the same. Krishna Menon asked me whether Harjinder had been speaking to me to which I replied that I had picked up these general rumours in the corridors of South Block and so I thought that I should bring them to his notice. He said that the Air Force wanted American F-104A planes but they did not realise that the Americans would never give these planes to India. As regards the French Mirage and the British Lightning, the former was not yet in the production line and the latter had not been approved by the NATO. The only other plane of this calibre was MIG-21, which was an improvement of the earlier models of MIG-17 and 19, which had proved their worth. Moreover, he was going to negotiate with Russia for a manufacturing licence so that India, faced with a very large demand, could, after buying a part of her requirement, start manufacturing the rest

with Russian assistance. Another factor in its favour was that the transaction would be based on rupee payment and would not immediately require expenditure of foreign exchange. In any case, he said that there was no other plane available and so he had no choice.

And Krishna Menon was right. The Americans to this day have refused to give F-104A planes to India and the Russians did not go back on their agreement and did help in setting up the MIG factory which is assembling MIG-21 planes and producing many of the parts now. So Kaul's lament on this score was also misplaced. Similarly, when Krishna Menon went in for Russian AN-12 planes, there was criticism that he should have taken the American C-130 instead. But the Americans have so far refused to release C-130 to India. Moreover, AN-12 was available on rupee payment and barter basis. Subsequently even the IAF preferred AN-12 to C-130 as being simpler to operate and more suitable to Indian conditions. Even in the case of submarines, in the post-Krishna Menon period, India had to turn to the Russians, after being disappointed by the British and the Americans, who had supplied a submarine to Pakistan. But the MIG deal gave further material to Krishna Menon's enemies to dub him as pro-Russia and anti-America. Probably he was both, but the truth is that the MIG deal did not depend on his political proclivities but on hard factual considerations. The MIG-21 has filled a real gap in India's air defence.

On another occasion, I remember Kaul almost using threat before the Secretary-General that all para-dropping of supplies would cease within two or three months, if the Government did not immediately purchase foreign parachutes worth several crores of rupees. After a few days when I visited NEFA, I found that all para-dropping of supplies of the NEFA Administration was being done with Assam-made parachutes and the IAF had never claimed that its para-dropping of supplies was more accurate than that of the Kalinga's which was doing the work for the NEFA Administration. On return to Delhi, when I mentioned this to the Prime Minister, he said that it had grown into a habit to ask for foreign supplies even when local supplies of equivalent

quality and in adequate number was available. And Krishna Menon said that there was no shortage of parachutes for supply dropping as the Ordnance Factory was producing them in adequate quantities at one-fifth the price of the foreign-made parachute.

I am mentioning these incidents—Kaul's projecting a requirement of military hardware which would cost India six hundred crores of rupees in foreign exchange and his lament about shortage of parachutes and Harjinder Singh condemning the MIG-21—to show that some of the propaganda, which had been made in respect of acquisition of defence stores from other countries as well as in the selection of one type of equipment in preference to another, was really wide off the mark; but it was conducted with great persistence either deliberately or out of ignorance and this had its repercussions both in the Services and in Parliament.

However, as I have said earlier, Thapar and Kaul were no stooges but it was widely believed that they were and, though this was most unfair and untrue, there it was. They had to make conscious efforts to remove that impression and often differed with Krishna Menon to show their independence. Because Krishna Menon was reluctant to beg America for arms, pressure mounted on him from the Army Headquarters to open up that source to the Indian Army. It is doubtful whether anything of real significance would have been available, but apparently Chester Bowles' talks with Kaul had given hopes. This attitude along with the criticisms that had mounted on Krishna Menon in those days in the American Press over his attitude towards the USA in the United Nations made Krishna Menon deeply suspicious that an American lobby was working in India for his undoing. He had complained about this to both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister who had asked me to find out what forces were working against him. There was a lobby no doubt, but it was a political lobby and not headed by the CIA, as Krishna Menon suspected.

Not satisfied with this finding, Krishna Menon then wanted a senior Intelligence Officer to be placed under his direct control to look into all these suspected cases of espionage and leakage of information. He wanted the post to be under the IB but the officer to be

placed at his disposal. I opposed this for two reasons. It would have brought the IB unnecessarily into conflict with the Army, raising a suspicion that the IB was doing espionage against it and secondly, as a matter of practical sense, I would not agree to an officer of the IB working directly under another Minister and whose work I could not control. This dialogue between Krishna Menon and myself went on for several weeks. At last Krishna Menon obtained the Home Minister's approval to this arrangement but I would not yield. Shastriji, after discussion with me, left the decision in my hands. Krishna Menon then told me that the Prime Minister had also agreed to this proposal. But I strongly advised Krishna Menon against this step. I told him that it would put the Army's back up against him and would give rise to a most unhealthy state of affairs and breed a state of suspicion all round. I suggested that if there was to be such a unit, it should be in the Defence Ministry. I was confident that the Prime Minister would support my view if it went to him for a decision. Kaul was then called and he also opposed. So Krishna Menon desisted though he was very unhappy. But this illustrates how suspicious Krishna Menon had become and how he bred suspicion all round. He trusted few and, in return in the Defence apparatus, he could evoke the trust of only a handful. This was sad, because Krishna Menon was generally right, but every time he was proved to be so, more opposition mounted against him. Differences even cropped up between him and Kaul, and they ultimately assumed such dimensions, that Kaul went away on leave in a huff in September, 1962, against the Minister's wishes. In this atmosphere of suspicion and counter-suspicion, constructive work to improve the Army and prepare it to meet the Chinese attack lagged behind, even though the danger was imminent and a Chinese attack had been predicted as early as June, 1962.

The years between Thimayya's offer of resignation and his final retirement were the years lost to the Indian army, a crucial period for giving a new orientation to the army's organisation, training, planning and equipment. The whole concept of fighting had to be given a new direction as the conventional methods, in which the army had been trained so far, would not be adequate against

the Chinese Army, which was well trained in unconventional forms and had successfully applied them against the Japanese and also against the KMT. This interlude was extremely unfortunate because if planning and training had started in 1958-59 when the Chinese became unmistakably hostile to India, by 1962, when the attack came, the Indian army would have been in a much better state of preparedness and would have faced the enemy with more confidence. When the Thapar-Kaul combination came to power, things started moving but Kaul's personal drive was neutralised by the muted suspicion against him and the jealousies that had surfaced due to his selection. Thapar and Kaul tried hard to get new equipment but did not seem to have taken into account the time factor involved in obtaining supplies either from abroad or by manufacturing them in India and seemed to have got lost in the wrangles that went on about the method of procurement. They also seemed to have overlooked the fact that the Chinese attack might come long before the new supplies could become available and so it was necessary to train the Army in the new methods of fighting the Chinese with the weapons that were available. All the accurate intelligence which had been collected on the organisation and the equipment of the Chinese Army and its tactical concepts and methods of fighting in different kinds of terrain, seems to have been largely ignored. The result was that neither any planning nor any training suitable to meet the new menace was undertaken. Kaul has admitted this in his book, though he has said that he was one amongst the many others who had to share this blame. However, it did not matter whose fault it was, but the fact remains that except the Thorat Plan of defence, which really drew a line nearly 100 miles south of the McMahon Line which the Indian troops were supposed to defend, there was no worthwhile plan drawn to fight the Chinese in any of the sectors. I do not know if the Thorat Plan was ever reduced in writing but, even if it was, it was never practised to judge its suitability in the NEFA terrain. And what would happen if the Chinese came only 50 to 80 miles and stopped there? Was there going to be no effort to fight them till they came 100 miles and not less? No account was taken of the fact that the high northern regions,

which, except Ladakh, were also full of jungles, constituted a terrain which the well-acclimatised and trained Chinese guerrilla army would find most convenient for their operations. The result was that the Indian Army was both psychologically and physically unprepared when it faced the Chinese in 1962. No doubt some of its equipment was not as good as that of the Chinese, but even the Chinese lacked sufficient equipment. (See Lin Piao's statement in Chapter 18.) Moreover, Henderson-Brooke Report has shown that it was not due to inferiority of equipment that the Indian Army was defeated but due to lack of training. For this the Army Headquarters of the time has to take the responsibility.

Khera has pointed out that prior to 1962, the Chiefs of Staff Committee did not function as a planning body to study and estimate the Chinese threats; there was no JIC worth the name; there was no separate planning body; and there was no separate training programme to suit the conditions in which the troops had to fight the Chinese. And, because there was no planning, because the Chinese threat was not properly realised in spite of the intelligence available, the army found itself completely unprepared to meet the challenge when it came. As pointed out both by Khera and Mankekar, there was also psychological unpreparedness on the part of the Army Headquarters to think in terms of an all-out war with China. That army was considered to be so formidable that the Indian Army could not even think in terms of a war with it. But it does not seem to have been realised that though the Chinese Army in China was no doubt formidable, it was not so when it came to operating in Tibet where it could only deploy a limited force, say a maximum 14 to 16 divisions. It was not beyond the ability of the Indian Army even in 1962 to contain this force on the frontiers, though it might lose some territory here and there. But as there was no proper estimate of the threat in spite of clear intelligence reports and tell-tale evidence of Chinese preparations for an attack, no preparation was made before the Chinese made their first move on September 8. Even then, till the last moment, the Army Headquarters was hoping against hope that the Chinese would not come any further. Naturally this state of psychological unpreparedness at the top

went all down the line and when it came to the question of pitting one's will against that of the enemy, the Indian will broke on account of this mental unpreparedness and this caused the disaster.

Even Kaul did not appear to have made a proper estimate of the threat facing him when he took over as the Corps Commander. There was need for some cool thinking of the odds he would be up against both due to the inadequacies in our own side and the preparations the Chinese had made and there was need for thorough discussion at the Army Headquarters of the steps that could be taken to meet the various contingencies that might arise and the resources which he would require at various stages. He seemed to have jumped into the fire bravely but blindly and, after showing a tremendous initial spurt of energy of moving the troops forward to the Nyamkachu river, the reaction set in, and being influenced by the pessimistic attitude of the Division and the Brigade Commanders, he went to the other extreme and became obsessed with the feeling about the invincible superiority of the Chinese Army and so had lost heart even before the fighting commenced.

It would, however, be wrong to blame any individual or any particular unit or even any organisation for this general failure. The failure was in the decision-making body in the Defence in not making a proper estimate of the threat that the Chinese posed and in not preparing a proper plan to meet the threat and in not training the troops both psychologically and physically for that purpose. The failure also was in not making a timely assessment of all the requirements that would be necessary to be assembled in particular theatres for the operations, should war eventually break out. The failure lay in not locating Depots near the forward areas, i.e. Assam in case of NEFA, and also in not earmarking troops from before and moving them nearer the frontier, even if they could not be located in the frontier regions, and training them in the new tasks awaiting them, instead of drawing troops, untrained for this purpose, on *ad hoc* basis, from all parts of India. The result was that, in the absence of a proper threat-estimation and planning, all the hard work which was put in by the Army

Headquarters in September/October, 1962, to mobilise troops in NEFA produced inadequate results and a debacle followed.

However, the Defence Minister cannot escape his own responsibility in this matter. He, of all the Members of the Cabinet except the Prime Minister, understood thoroughly the world forces at work and the Chinese motivations and the compulsions behind their line of approach. It was expected of him to forewarn the Defence Forces of the danger that was inexorably approaching our frontiers and ensure that they were properly prepared to meet it. This was more important than to spend time on the day-to-day administrative details which could easily take care of themselves even without his intervention. It is a fact that, from 1959 onwards, the Defence Minister held several conferences to decide steps that should be taken against certain Chinese intrusions or to prevent such intrusions. But this was all done piecemeal as and when the occasion arose. There had been never, to my knowledge, any deep study of the Chinese motivations, the significance of their activities in Tibet, a proper estimate of the threat which the Chinese Army in Tibet constituted, of the resources available in India to meet the threat, of action needed to remove the inadequacies, of the difficulties of logistics which would be faced in conducting the operations and of reaching supplies to the troops in the frontier both at peace time and during operations, of the training and the preparation of the troops and the officers and building their ideological background—in other words in framing the guidelines of a defence policy and in the higher direction of war.

The Defence Minister was later accused of political interference in the Army operations. This charge was not correct as has been shown by me in earlier chapters. What he could be rightly accused of was inadequate political indoctrination of the Armed Forces to prepare them psychologically for a war with China and train and equip them for that purpose. Not only that, it was expected of him to bring home to his Cabinet colleagues the seriousness of the threat and also to prepare the country for it. Funds are always scarce and a Finance Minister must scrutinise the expenditure of every department, but when the urgency and the need are realised, funds always come. It was the Defence Minister's duty

to convince his Cabinet colleagues about the imminent danger that India was facing. Probably, as Mankekar has said, Krishna Menon's mental make-up and upbringing was such as revolted against any idea of war but that would be too simple an explanation because Krishna Menon did not show any hesitation to march troops into Goa.

It was quite proper for the Defence Minister to aim at self-sufficiency in matter of supplies. But even in advanced countries it takes quite some time for a new weapon to pass from the blue-print stage to that of production in adequate numbers and distribution to the troops. In India, with its low technological level and slow administrative processes, the time taken is much longer. In the meantime, the old arms become older, the number available becomes fewer because of rejections and even adequate training programmes cannot be undertaken. So the intermediate stage has to be filled up by the purchase of ready-made weapons from whatever source they may be available. But this was not done. The result was that in spite of the great initiative and energy that Krishna Menon showed in setting up new units of production, overcoming many obstacles that came in his way, the weapons were not ready in 1962 and the shortages became more and more telling as the years passed by. Then there were great physical difficulties in reaching supplies to the theatres of operation in inaccessible frontier areas. The Border Roads Organisation was set up at his initiative and he went all out to procure the necessary equipment for it. But the organisation was still in its infancy and was still digging not far from the foothills when the avalanche came and the difficulties of logistics could not be overcome. The Chinese had planned their roads from the time they came into Tibet and by 1962 had completed their road-system.

This does not in any way minimise the failure of the Army Headquarters to realise the potentialities of the Chinese threat and take suitable and timely action to meet it. It was expected of them to set up a study team to analyse every aspect of this threat and the measures necessary to counteract it. They cannot take shelter behind some one else's failure to bring home to them the imminence of this danger. After all, they were responsible for the

protection of India from external aggression and the country depended on them to do it. It was up to them to study, analyse and weigh the nature of the threat and bring this to the notice of the Government and press for action. As Mankekar has pointed out, even when the Government woke up belatedly to the danger from China, the Army did not and required many proddings before it could be moved and for quite a long time the "Can't do it" attitude persisted.

Hence the failure was in the higher perception of the forces at work, in understanding the nature and extent of the threat, in analysing its various aspects and setting in motion in proper time such steps as were necessary to meet it, in making a proper estimate of intelligence received and in all that goes in the name of higher direction of war and not the failure so much of Commanders and men in the field, who did well in some places and not so well in others, but failed in all cases to stem the Chinese advance because of inadequate prior preparations made by the Army Headquarters.

However, one should not lose sight of the fact that only a small part of the Indian army was engaged in the short war with China in 1962. China was at that time militarily much superior to India and, in addition, being the aggressor, had the initiative with her. Hence she could strike at a place and at a time of her own choosing. In similar circumstances, in the early years of the last great war, Great Britain had practically lost her entire army in France and territorially the whole of Western Europe had been occupied by the Germans. In the Far East also both Great Britain and the USA were swept away by the Japanese from South-East Asia and the Western Pacific. Russia also lost practically the whole of the western part of the country to Nazi Germany. Slim and MacArthur, two of the most notable Commanders in World War II, initially met serious debacles. Even in face of such great disasters, compared to which the one suffered by India in 1962 was negligible, the people of Great Britain and America remained calm and went on preparing for the day of retribution which came not immediately but several years later. China was clever; she quickly declared cease-fire and withdrew from the Indian soil. Otherwise

it was certain that her troops would have met the same fate which the Japanese troops met in Manipur, Nagaland and the Arakans and in the Pacific Islands. Probably because we are a newly independent nation, we are more sensitive about these matters and hence this military defeat of ours has attracted more criticism than its magnitude deserved. This has led to a certain amount of witch-hunting which was quite unnecessary and uncalled for. A book like *India's China War*, written by one of the haters of the new democracies, aims at keeping mutual jealousies and suspicions alive as do several tendentious books written in this country. Pandit Nehru had clearly foreseen that a war with China would be a fifty years' war and would last for several generations and during this period there would be many ups and downs and just as China might win a battle on the frontiers so might India; but that would not end the India-China tussle in which much graver issues of great fundamental importance were at stake. We have yet to see the worst phases of China's war against India. When that situation will come, no one can foretell. And in the meantime there will be many battles and skirmishes, and wars and even occupation of territory. The task has been set before us by a ruthless dictatorship in China and we must unitedly get on with it and reach our goal to make ourselves forever safe from our northern neighbour.

29 Higher Direction

WAR IS THE culmination of a country's foreign policy and in the prosecution of that policy often lie the seeds of a future war, though its objective may be to secure peace. No doubt, foreign policy is based on the country's own interests and may vary from time to time as different situations develop. Yet, there may be a foreign policy which basically wants to follow the path of peace without any aggressive feeling towards any neighbour or there may be one which is basically aggressive and is directed at securing supremacy over others peacefully or by deceit if possible, otherwise by war. The first was the policy that India followed and this was born out of the path she had chosen for herself in the domestic field, that of democracy, socialism and secularism. On the other hand, China followed the second course and this again was born out of her policy of dictatorship and steamrolling all minorities into Han nationalism.

Whenever a country faces a military defeat, as India did in 1962, it is natural that the foreign policy it has been pursuing would come in for criticism, and one has heard it repeated *ad nauseam* that India's China policy failed in 1962. Looked at from a narrow angle, it no doubt failed, because in spite of India's attempt to maintain peaceful relations with China, she was attacked and defeated. But it would be wrong to conclude from this one single fact that the policy as a whole had failed. Many things have to be taken into consideration to come to a proper judgment. When and in what circumstances was the policy framed? Was it in keeping with India's internal policy and international thinking? Whether the policy was flexible enough to allow India to manoeuvre? Whether the pursuit of the policy alone was responsible for want of preparations in other directions? Whether there were alternatives which could have been followed to avoid the clash

that took place? What was the outcome of that clash—did India lose or gain and to what extent? Could this ultimate result have been avoided in any circumstances, i.e. by following any other policy? These are questions which must be answered with an objective mind and after proper analysis before one can really sit on judgment. Then other things also count such as international compulsions which bring about a conjunction of forces from which a country cannot escape and is drawn into a war much against its liking and quite against its professions.

In unfolding the story in the previous chapters, I have given answers at the proper places to most of the questions which have been posed here. It would, however, be as well to summarise them at one place and come to a constructive conclusion whether the foreign policy that India was pursuing had failed and, if it did, to analyse why it did and where, so that this may serve as a lesson for the future.

The first act of the Government which has been criticised was India's recognition of the Communist Government of China in 1950 soon after the Communists ousted Chiang Kai-shek from power. It has been alleged that at that stage India should have linked the question of recognition of China with the latter's recognition of the semi-independent status of Tibet and also the recognition of India's northern frontiers. To this question, Pandit Nehru had himself given the reply and this has been quoted in Chapter 6. With the Pacific Ocean separating her from China, it was possible for the USA to refuse to recognise for a while the new government of China which controlled the whole of mainland China with a population of 700 million people, the largest mass of population in the world. But it was quite another thing for India, with 2,000 miles of border with China, to do so. Similar was the case with other countries in the periphery like Burma, Nepal, Afghanistan, Russia and Mongolia. America could close her eyes and say that China did not exist, but India could not; it was right on her door step. China had always been an independent country and held a permanent seat in the Security Council. All that had happened was that a change in the government had taken place, and this happens from time to time in many

countries by peaceful ballot or through the process of civil disturbances or even by military revolt or a coup. One country cannot withhold the recognition of another because it does not approve of the method that has been followed to bring about a change. Non-recognition of the Chinese Communist Government in 1950, when India was in diplomatic relations with its predecessor Government, would have been the non-recognition of a fact of history which could not be ignored, and in the case of India with such a large frontier, it would have deprived her of all negotiating facilities. What the USA, with the Pacific Ocean barrier, could do, India, with a long land frontier, could not.

The next aspect of India's policy which has been criticised is that India should not have recognised China's suzerainty or sovereignty over Tibet without first securing India's own rights in that country and an assurance from China about Tibetan autonomy. India, it must be remembered, was a successor to the British Government and had inherited the latter's treaty obligations. In the past decades, the British Government, which had direct dealings with Tibet and China for nearly seventy years before Indian Independence, had never recognised Tibet as an independent country, nor had any other country in the world done so. How could India then overnight declare Tibet to be independent? And even if she had, what good would it have brought either to India or to Tibet? Such a policy would have hardened China's attitude towards India and Tibet from the beginning, giving India no time to consolidate her position in the frontier regions which she did in the comparatively peaceful period from 1950 to 1959.

The third suggestion which was put forward was that India should have intervened militarily in Tibet to prevent the Chinese occupation of that country. Whether internationally this would have been justified or not is now a purely academic matter but expert opinion then was that it could not be. However, as a practical proposition, military intervention would have been possible only if India had sufficient troops to spare, with weapons and personal equipment suitable for operations in the Tibetan plateau and communications to keep the troops properly supplied in summer, winter and rains. The analogy of Younghusband's Expedition

in 1904 does not apply, because Younghusband took a brigade against a few thousand of untrained, ill-equipped Tibetans with no leadership. Yet, it is forgotten that when, as a counter to the Younghusband expedition, the Manchu General, Chou Erh-feng, invaded Tibet with a Chinese army, the British did not intervene in spite of the thirteenth Dalai Lama's appeal, with the result that the latter had to flee Tibet and take shelter in India for several years and Tibet at that time passed completely under Chinese subjugation. The hard fact was that India's post-partition army of less than 3,00,000 was already bogged down in Kashmir, Hyderabad and other places, and it could hardly spare even an ill-equipped battalion for Tibet. This would have been a misadventure and except causing irritation to the Chinese and incurring their immediate hostility, it would have borne no practical result. The presence of these troops might have even given the Chinese an excuse not only to overrun Tibet faster but to come further down into NEFA, Sikkim and Bhutan. At that time India did not have any troops even to defend these territories. So this suggestion of military intervention does not bear any scrutiny. Even Mankekar, who has been critical of India's foreign policy, has conceded the impracticability of such a step. He says: "It is readily conceded that the 'big stick' diplomacy which the British imperialists practised in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, could never be repeated in the post-war era. Nor was it within the means of India in 1950 or 1959 to intervene in Tibet to prevent the Chinese aggression. A democratic India could never compete in a military race with a Communist totalitarian regime that has preferred guns to butter and converted an entire nation into an armed camp."

The fourth aspect of the foreign policy that has come for criticism is the signing of the India-China Trade Agreement in 1954 and the renouncement of India's treaty rights in Tibet. These treaty rights had been forcibly acquired by the British from a weak Tibet and had not been acceded to by the suzerain China even in those days. Tibet had on many occasions tried to free herself from the shackles of these treaties. Even Indian public opinion in the earlier part of the century had severely criticised the British

action. In fact, no country can impose such unequal treaties on another independent country, however small and weak the latter may be in these days. This was possible only in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries when a few European powers were practically dominating the world. India might have tried to hold on to the treaties, but Chou En-lai had already told the Indian Ambassador that, whilst China would respect India's trade and cultural rights, other aspects of these treaties must go. Once China is acknowledged as the suzerain or the sovereign, the treaty rights can only stand provided the other country agrees. Therefore, it would have been futile to quarrel with China over some rights which India could not enforce and for the continuation of which she found no moral justification. So these rights had to go. Either India would have to give them up in good grace or would be forcibly deprived of them. The first had the advantage of at least keeping the other country quiet for some time; the second had none.

Then comes the question of the Trade and the *Panchsheel* Agreement. Here critics have pointed out that at this stage India should have secured the Chinese recognition of the McMahon Line in return for India's agreement to regulate trade and traffic between India and Tibet. Chou En-lai had quite definitely told the Indian delegation that the boundary question could not be included for discussion then as the time was not ripe for it, though India had maintained that all pending issues were to be discussed. It was to India's interest that trade and cultural relations with Tibet should continue. If the Trade Agreement had not been entered into, cultural intercourse would have stopped abruptly cutting off all further contacts with Tibet. Such an attitude would certainly have encouraged the Chinese to assert their claim on parts of Indian territory at an earlier date and this would have added strength to their claim. Our own administrative presence in NEFA was still extremely weak and at long distances from the actual frontier. A calculated risk was taken and this should not be considered as negligence or folly. In fact, the result of this was that when the Chinese ultimately came to lay their claim on NEFA, they found that the Indian Government was in actual

control of the entire territory south of the McMahon Line and was forced to accept that as the line of actual control, even though they would not accept the validity of the McMahon Line itself.

Therefore, on all these counts it does not appear that the Government of India had any option other than the one which it followed. This policy was certainly not based on any high-sounding philosophy of Pandit Nehru as imputed by some critics or on any unrealistic assessment of Chinese intentions or the belief that the nonalignment policy and the *Panchsheel* Agreement were strong enough by themselves to neutralise the Chinese. It was a hard, realistic appraisal that had been made and correctly followed which had produced the desired result, that is to give time to India to consolidate her control over the territory up to the frontier which had been left unadministered by the British.

But was the Government of India short-sighted about Chinese intentions? Whilst making short-term arrangements, however valid and compelling they were, did the Government of India not anticipate the disputes that raised their heads in later years, culminating in the act of aggression by China? Some critics have blamed the Government for relying far too much on diplomacy and not paying sufficient attention to strengthening the defences of the country. But this criticism is also based on a superficial view of the developments and without taking into consideration all the steps that were taken anticipating that such a turn of events might take place. After all, the validity of a particular policy can last only for a certain period and not for ever and adjustments have to be made all the time to suit the new developments. Even the USA, which a decade ago would not even admit the existence of Communist China, is now anxious to open a dialogue with that country. The setting up of the Himmatsinghji Committee to recommend steps for the defence of the north and north-east border was a recognition of the threat that might develop in the frontier areas. Whatever the Committee recommended received immediate attention and was implemented, though, as has been explained in Chapter 9, this was a very hard task, much harder than

what the Chinese faced in Tibet; and yet it was pursued with single-mindedness. And by and large most of the recommendations had been implemented by 1959 when the relations with China sharply deteriorated. That Pandit Nehru had always visualised that China could not be contained by peaceful means alone and might eventually take up an aggressive posture was clear from the instructions he had given to us as early as 1952 to treat China as a potentially hostile country and make preparations accordingly. Again, in 1953, when he instructed that the Tibetan refugees should be befriended and helped in every way, he was preparing for the day when it would be possible for India to re-establish Tibet in a semi-independent if not an independent status. In 1954, when the Trade Agreement was signed, he was clearly distressed at the Chinese refusal to acknowledge the border; and he ordered the checkposts to be extended as far north towards the frontier as possible. If the order could not be carried out fully at all points of the border, this was because it was a very difficult task to accomplish in the fifties with the resources available then. Yet the task was pursued with great diligence and heroism in spite of all the difficulties that had to be faced and the rigours that had to be accepted and was completed everywhere excepting in North-East Ladakh, which had been left out deliberately as the area was uninhabited.

Apart from meeting the potential military threat from China, the Government of India had to meet many bigger challenges in the field of economic development. China with Russian assistance was making fast progress in the economic field and in its industrialisation. She had the advantage of working under a dictatorial system which could mobilise the people and coerce them into untold privations to reach the target. India had to achieve the same result but within the framework of democracy. This, as universally acknowledged, was a much more difficult process and required a much higher order of statesmanship and also of leadership. It was India's example of economic progress under democracy which saved practically the whole of South East and West Asia and Africa from going under Communism. But in a democracy this progress could be achieved provided a long period of

peace could be assured so that the entire resources and efforts of the government and the country could be devoted to development alone. It is not that it was the Government alone which was thinking of economy in all non-development schemes but this was stressed by the Opposition also which, time and again, during debates in Parliament, insisted on cuts in the Government's budget estimates on non development projects like administration and defence. China had started with a tremendous advantage with a ready-made 2.5 million strong army and all the latest American equipment (latest in the sense that those produced up to 1945-46 and which the Americans had given to Chiang Kai-shek). India had a very big leeway to make up and the effort would have taxed all her resources retarding inevitably all her economic progress. This would have given rise to a state of serious internal discontent, the final outcome of which would have been difficult to foresee. We have seen that even as late as 1962 an experienced General like Thimayya, who had had a close look at the Chinese army in Korea and who was the Chief of Army Staff during the previous four years, had said that he could not visualise an all-out war with China and, therefore, the solution of the trouble on the frontier had to be left to the diplomatic skill of the government.

Whilst struggling to bring India up from the undeveloped condition in which the British had left it to a more developed state, the Government was faced with a new danger, that of the arming of the Pakistan army by the USA even in spite of India's strong protests. Whatever money could be spared from development had then to be diverted to the acquiring of that type of arms and equipment which could match the increased Pakistani threat. Hence the acquisition of the Centaurian tanks or the Hunter and Gnat air-craft, and many other items; and these consumed almost all that could be spared for defence from development; and yet these would not be of much use against the Chinese in the northern frontier regions.

A question has been pertinently raised why, if India could not afford to take all the defensive measures by herself, did she not enter into an alliance with another country to protect herself against China. The two countries with which such an alliance

could have been worthwhile for India's security were Russia and America. An alliance with Russia against China was impossible in the mid-fifties as Russia was then a firm military ally of China and was supplying a great deal of military hardware, technical know-how and even nuclear data to the latter. The only other country was the United States of America. Instead of entering into such an alliance India preferred the line of nonalignment, and this policy has been criticised as being responsible for India's defeat at the hands of China in 1962. But it is extremely doubtful if alliance with America would have been of any real use to India in the material field whilst definitely entangling her in the cold war and big power struggle in which India had no interest. As K. Subramanyam has pointed out, in his study on *India's Defence Problems*, "The events between 1962 and 1965 should have disillusioned even the most ardent advocates of the alliance policy. Even after India had fought a divisional-scale war with China, had declared a state of emergency and had taxed herself to a point which demanded significant sacrifices from the people, assistance which other powers were prepared to provide to India was meagre indeed. India's requests for fighter aircraft, air defence equipment, supply dropping aircraft were all turned down. . . . It is difficult to escape the conclusion that India could not obtain adequate amount of military assistance mainly because India refused to surrender her independent decision-making right and content herself with being a subsidiary decision-making centre only. . . . It is difficult to envisage that India, with her resources, size and population, could ever have functioned in the kind of alliance system which emerged in the fifties."

Apart from this, there were other factors also. No other country in the world had a military requirement to fight a war at an altitude of 12,000 feet and above. Consequently no other country had the need for the type of equipment and weaponry which India required to fight at these high altitudes. Therefore, it was impossible for India to get all the weapons she needed from one single country even if she had entered into an alliance with that country. India had to go to Great Britain, France, Japan, Germany, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and America to find

different types of weapons and equipment suited to her requirements and had often to alter them or to design new weapons in her own factories for use in these areas. Moreover, with the man-power availability in India, it would not have added either to her prestige or viability if India had to seek external man-power for the defence of her northern borders. As Pandit Nehru had pointed out. America or Great Britain was not going to send American or British troops to fight in Ladakh. That fight had to be done by Indians alone and for this purpose India had an inexhaustible supply of manpower to fall back upon. Therefore, neither from the point of view of resources, in terms of equipment or man-power, nor from the point of view of political acceptability, was a military alliance a practical proposition in the mid-fifties.

On the other hand, the nonalignment policy followed by India benefited her a great deal. This has been described in Chapter 12. Nonalignment ultimately brought the Soviet Union heavily on India's side. Russia supported India without any reservation on the Kashmir issue at a very crucial time when most of the Security Council Members were ranged against her.

Russia has given considerable assistance in the industrial field. She has also assisted India in setting up factories for manufacturing supersonic fighter aircraft. Russia opened her market from which India could buy her military supplies apart from many other industrial and other goods on rupee payment and exchange basis and on easy credit facilities. Her example was followed by the East European countries as well. This nonalignment policy which encouraged Russia to declare India as a friend when China attacked her caused much irritation to China and led finally to China's complete break with Soviet Russia and the emergence of a frontier problem with that country even though the formal military alliance was still in existence.

Even immediately after the Chinese aggression in 1962, when India was forced to ask for foreign assistance in arms, this was given by Great Britain and the USA but simultaneously India was pressurised to open talks with Pakistan to settle her dispute over Kashmir, obviously intending that India should make further

concessions to the aggressor in addition to leaving in her possession one-third of the Kashmir territory which she had illegally occupied. And what was the aid that was given? K. Subramanyam's study brings out that "The assistance given by the United States consisted of small arms, signal equipment and certain quantity of ammunition. This help no doubt proved to be a morale-booster. However, at the same time a myth was created of massive military assistance from the west. Accounts appeared claiming that the unilateral withdrawal of the Chinese forces was caused purely by the assistance of the western powers and the promise of such further assistance. At any rate if one scrutinised these accounts in the light of the available facts, it would appear that the total aid promised in December, 1962, by President Kennedy and Prime Minister Macmillan was to the extent of 120 million dollars (which at the exchange rate of those days would have meant 57 crores of rupees). Subsequently the United States agreed to extend the assistance by another 50 million dollars (or 23.75 crores of rupees); and in 1964 following Chavan's visit to America a further assistance at the rate of 50 million dollars a year was promised. In actual fact, however, till the suspension of assistance in September, 1965, India had received equipment worth only about 40 crores of rupees from the United States. This was the flow of equipment over a period of 34 months." Against this, over the same period India spent nearly 2,100 crores of rupees for her defence. So the total assistance does not work out to even 2 per cent of India's expenditure on that account. If India could spend 2,100 crores of rupees, she could certainly have spent another 40 crores from her own resources. Since 1965 when the aid was stopped India had spent up to the end of 1968 nearly 2,800 crores of rupees for her defence and this will go on increasing as years roll by. So India can afford to do away with the small gift of weapons and equipment which the Western countries condescended to give her even when she was in imminent danger. Further, it should be realised that a sophisticated weapon, which is powerful in the hands of the technologically advanced Americans, is not always as effective in the hands of the Indians or the Pakistanis. This was proved in the Pakistani war of 1965

when the less fancied Centaurian or AMX tanks, which the Indians possessed, proved to be more than a match for the Pattons which spearheaded the Pakistani attack. Similarly, the rugged MIG-21 was found to be more suitable in Indian conditions and in Indian hands than the F-104A plane which the Pakistanis possessed. Though India was denied the supply of C-130 transport planes by America, the Indian Air Force ultimately found that in Indian conditions and Indian hands, the Russian AN-12 was superior. Diversification of the sources of supply was a great advantage which India gained by following the path of non-alignment. Moreover, even if India were allied with USA, how long would that alliance have lasted? India's China problem is not transitory; in the thinking of Pandit Nehru, this was a permanent problem and the fight, which had started as a battle for the rectification of the frontiers, would last for a hundred years or more as much deeper issues were involved. Would not America's ardour end as soon as all her surplus stock of weapons were used up and she would have to dig deep into her pockets to continue the aid? Has not American liking for Chiang Kai-shek visibly cooled? Is not America on the point of abandoning South Vietnam ? So it would have been pathetic for a big country like India to depend on another country for her protection.

Some critics have even gone so far as to ridicule Pandit Nehru for having felt no moral compunction when he asked for military aid from Great Britain and the USA though he had earlier spurned offers of a military alliance by the same countries. The reply to this was given by Pandit Nehru himself. He said that "When a country finds herself in difficulties, she asks for aid from whatever quarters it may come. But this is an exceptional circumstance and does not in any way justify the country getting involved in military alignments in peace time." What he said was correct. Russia took military aid from her arch-enemy America when hardpressed by the Germans; and the Americans became an ally of the Russians when they were on the point of being thrown out of the Pacific Ocean by the Japanese. And immediately after the war, Russia and America fell apart and continued to remain in confrontation with each other. So there is no justification

in criticising Pandit Nehru because he accepted aid from certain Western countries when the northern part of the country was in the imminent danger of being overrun by the Chinese. Actually, it was nonalignment which, while keeping India out of the cold war confrontation of the two power blocks, enabled her to keep her option free to seek help from both the blocs when in need.

The question then arises why, if everything was done in the right way, India faced this aggression by China and met a debacle. The point is that this aggression had to be faced sooner or later. If India had adopted an unfriendly posture from the beginning, the confrontation would have come earlier with less preparations on India's part. The posture which India adopted helped in postponing the evil day and gave India the much-needed time to consolidate her position over most of the territory which she had claimed as her own but which the British had neglected till the time they left in 1947. It may then be argued how was it that with so much time to prepare, India could muster a much smaller force in NEFA and Ladakh than China did in Tibet. China had started with a much bigger force than India in 1950, i.e. 2.3 million against 0.3 million. Thus, there was a big lee-way to make up. Moreover, China was much better placed logistically in the dry plateau of Tibet than India in the rain-soaked NEFA, starting from nearly the sea level in the Brahmaputra valley and rising to a height of 12 to 14 thousand feet where the Tibet boundary started. This difficulty of geography will always remain with India. This was the reason why India was able to muster less number of troops in NEFA and Ladakh than China could in Tibet.

The question then arises that when we realised that there was such a disparity in the balance of forces between these two countries on the frontiers, how was it that we undertook the "forward policy" in Ladakh which, it has been alleged, served as the red rag to the Chinese. But, I have explained in Chapter 19 that the name "forward policy" given to certain steps taken in 1961 was quite wrong. One cannot be guilty of following a forward policy in one's own country. All that India had done was to make an attempt to stop further Chinese intrusion into Indian territory.

Unfortunately, the very critics, who had blamed the Government earlier for not taking effective measures to safeguard the frontier, later found fault with the Government for having adopted the so-called "forward policy." The only alternative to this policy at that time was to acquiesce in giving up more territory to the Chinese as and when they pressed forward. The Chinese hunger for land was insatiable and the Chinese thrust forward would not have stopped till China had got back under her control all the territory she had claimed as belonging to her, i.e. the whole of NEFA, large slices in UP and Himachal Pradesh and North-East Ladakh.

In the ultimate analysis, India accepted the confrontation at the right time. Though, no doubt, we met a debacle and suffered humiliation, territorially India did not lose anything more than what China had already grabbed and, on the other hand, with the help of the Colombo Powers, India's position in the frontier crystallised more or less at the line which India had claimed barring only in North-East Ladakh which India could not have held militarily at that time and it does not seem that she would be able to do so in the foreseeable future. The indirect result was that the 1962 trouble led to the strengthening of the administration in NEFA and all the frontier areas, development of communications, and the raising and deployment of sizeable forces. If we had pursued any other policy in 1961 or 1962, the result would not have been any different; on the other hand, the position in NEFA and the rest of the frontier would still have remained undecided. Though, no doubt, even in the ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, Lin Piao declared that so far as Western Tibet (i.e. North-East Ladakh) was concerned, the question was closed and China, which did not accept the McMahon Line, would agree to open talks only on the eastern frontier, provided India accepted this position regarding the Ladakh frontier, it will not be possible for China to convince the world that she has now any claims in NEFA south of that Line.

Another question that is sometimes raised is why India did not make up with Pakistan so that she did not have to fight on two fronts simultaneously. In posing the question it is not suggested on what terms could the quarrel be made up. India had proposed

a no-war pact with Pakistan many times but the offer had been rejected out of hand everytime pending the settlement of the Kashmir issue. India had even offered to freeze the boundary along the cease-fire line, leaving over a third of Jammu and Kashmir territory in Pakistani hands. But, this also did not find favour with that country. On what conditions then would Pakistan be willing to resume friendly relations with India? To satisfy Pakistan, India would have to hand over the whole of Kashmir valley and with it the whole of Ladakh would also go, if not to Pakistan probably to China. She would also have to part with the whole of the Poonch-Rajauri area. Would Indian public opinion accept this position or would she be at all morally justified to hand over this population to Pakistan and China? When Ayub had offered joint defence of the sub-continent, he meant defence against Soviet Russia and not against China, because at that time America was also obsessed with the Russian threat and was arming Pakistan against the possibility of a threat from that quarter. Ayub then was not thinking of a threat to the sub-continent from China. Hence, as Pandit Nehru had asked then, a joint pact against whom? The question remained un-answered. And a pact after 1959 was not possible because even in October/November, 1962, the British and the Americans were unable to get a clear assurance from Ayub that Pakistan would not take advantage of India's difficulties.

Having dealt with all the criticisms that have been raised against the foreign policy which the Government of India had been pursuing in the fifties and which, according to some critics, had led to this "uncalled for" war with China in which India met a debacle, it is not claimed that everything that could have been done in the field of preparing for the threat was actually done. So far as the Prime Minister was concerned, it is not a fact, as has been explained in the unfolding of this narrative, that he was unaware of the potential threat from China. Indeed, he always considered that an attack by China was not only possible but was bound to to come eventually. He had warned the Administration, the Intelligence and the Army about it and had tried to energise all these organisations to be ready to meet this threat when it would

materialise. But, somehow or the other, even when the Government of India realised the urgency of the situation and the need for adequate defence preparations, these fell far short of the actual requirements. Much valuable time was lost after the Thimayya-Krishna Menon episode took place and even when the Defence woke up to the situation in 1961, it was far too much riven by internal dissensions to be able to make a united effort. But this type of teething trouble takes place in all countries. Apparently, there was lack of something vital as a result of which the consciousness of the Defence to the threat steadily creeping forward from the north was not roused. In other words, where we failed was in the proper communication of the apprehensions in the Prime Minister's mind, to which he had given repeated expressions, to the Defence and all the associated departments and Ministries. Here, therefore, was the failure of the decision-making machinery, in which the foreign policy is fused with internal and defence policies and all departments of the Government are made aware of the urgency of the situation and cooperate whole-heartedly in making the necessary preparations to meet the threat. Here was a failure of coordinated action. After all, the Defence effort does not consist only of recruiting men and drilling them. That is the least part of it. It means much more—finding of equipment, producing the equipment, manufacturing of the components required for the equipment, setting up factories for that purpose, road-building, producing or procuring road-building equipment, mobilisation of finance for the purpose, encouraging private enterprise to produce defence requirements, and most important of all building up the defence consciousness amongst the people and the proper psychology amongst the troops and hundreds of other things which together make for coordinated defence effort. And it was in this field of coordinated action that we failed, with the result that we were not as ready physically, mentally and psychologically as we should have been. Even if the full realisation had come to all the services, it would even then have been impossible to make the country agree and bear the sacrifices involved in spending a thousand crores a year for Defence; it would have been impossible to convince the people that

this was necessary. This was possible only after 1962. Therefore, the preparations that could have been made, even if we had gone full-steam ahead, would still have been much below the standard reached in 1969 and China would still have succeeded in defeating the Indian army in 1962, though it is quite certain that the Indian forces would have been able to give a much better account of themselves and would not have conceded so much territory without a bitter fight.

Let us, therefore, examine what was the weakness of this decision-making authority which in our estimation failed leading to the events that took place in 1962.

Unfortunately, in India public opinion is generally uninformed about military matters. This was a heritage of the past when the foreign and defence policies were kept in the hands of the British Government and even Indian Members of the Viceroy's Council, hardly ever came to be consulted about them. Defence was, therefore, more or less a closed subject for Indian Parliament and the Indian people. Though the budget used to be debated and demands made every year for a decrease in the allotments, yet this was not done on the basis of any study of the threats which India faced and her commitments to her neighbours and for which the necessary provision had to be made. Unfortunately, this attitude of denying any worthwhile information to Parliament continued even after independence and successive Defence Ministers, Krishna Menon more than any other, had always found it convenient to deny to Parliament, on grounds of security, any inconvenient information about Defence. It is no exaggeration to say that regarding India's Defence preparations, except a few persons directly connected with Defence affairs, Indians even at the highest level are more uninformed than the educated public among the British, the Americans or the Russians. In the hands of foreign experts, even the meagre information which a Defence Minister discloses to Parliament is enough for making a fairly accurate analysis of the strength of the Indian forces though it leaves the Indian public only guessing. Moreover, India is still so much dependent on foreign countries in many essential supplies that people versed in military matters can on the basis of

these transactions assess accurately the targets aimed at. Thus, many good analytical reviews of India's defence preparations had appeared in articles published in foreign countries, though such information was generally lost in India.

When in Parliament in the past there was criticism about the failure of India's foreign policy, the main aim of the critics was to pressurise the Government to give up its policy of nonalignment and make an alliance with one power bloc or the other. The fallacy of this argument advocating alignment has been exposed earlier in this chapter. Again, when there was criticism against the Government for not taking adequate military action against the Chinese in Ladakh, there was little realisation of what such action would involve and what might be the repercussions. Referring to such criticisms, Pandit Nehru once remarked, "In Parliament and outside many people criticised the Government for not driving out the Chinese and marching troops against them. These people forgot the facts and allowed their minds to run faster than logic, not appreciating what would be the result. India wanted China to vacate the areas she had illegally occupied or India would try to drive the Chinese out. But, it was a big thing and India had to prepare for it and think of the consequences. It was not wise to rush in head down and get the head caught in a trap. The task of thrashing the Chinese and driving them out might be a fifty year long operation. If India deliberately entered a war of this type, it meant entering a war which might last for generations." The point that military action in Ladakh would in reprisal bring military action from the enemy in other parts of the frontier was overlooked and if it was not overlooked, then the question was never considered whether India then had sufficient means to take this military action at one place with full preparations to meet the challenge all over the 2,000 miles of the frontier and also face a long-drawn-out war which would eat up all her vital resources retarding her economic progress for ever. Obviously, she did not have the means at that time and this the Government realised. But the same critics had at the same time been pressing for reduction of India's Defence expenditure. We then went to the other extreme of condemning the Government for resisting

the Chinese incursions in NEFA. What other option was there for the Government? There was none. And the decision that was taken to resist further Chinese incursions has ultimately produced a result not unfavourable to India though she suffered a military defeat. All this proves how unhelpful can be uninformed public opinion towards vital defence requirements. And the opposition cannot be blamed for this. Any information on which a proper assessment of these factors could be based was denied to it following a policy which was a continuation of the old colonial policy.

Hence, these debates, except generating a feeling throughout the country that the leaders had failed in their foreign policy, served little constructive purpose in building up the country's defence consciousness against the twin enemies—Pakistan and China. This, as K. Subramanyam has pointed out in his analysis of *India's Problem of Security*, is unlike the practice that exists in Western democracies, where big debates are conducted in Parliament, Press and other representative councils regarding the foreign policy, the impact of the foreign policy on the internal policy, the impact of the two on defence policy and the defence targets that should be aimed at to secure these external and internal objectives. There is need in this country to build up this type of informed public opinion which can sensibly and meaningfully discuss all aspects of the defence problem and give both constructive suggestions and criticisms which would be really helpful to the Government and the Defence Services. This is possible only if the old colonial attitude of the Government, denying every information about defence to Parliament, is discarded in favour of more communication between the two. There is also need for Parliamentary Committees on Defence studying all aspects of this problem, taking evidence, if necessary in camera, so that a dialogue may be started between the political leaders, the Members of the Government, Civil Servants and the Military Chiefs to formulate the main lines of Defence strategy. After all, it is the people who pay heavily for the defence forces and any shortcomings in defence against external aggression recoils heavily on them and they have to bear the burden of heavy taxation, demanding the utmost

sacrifice. So, their representatives must have a say in the formulation of the defence policy and in fixing targets. Without bringing defence under the close examination of the people's representatives, its cost-effectiveness cannot be improved, which means that the country is not getting all that it is paying for.

The debacle of October/November, 1962 has often been ascribed to political interference in military matters. Also books like *The Untold Story* and *The Himalayan Blunder*, which were written by their authors largely in self-defence and for finding excuses for their own failure, spin out yarns about the so-called political interference, even when none existed. And it is most unfortunate that even responsible columnists have fallen for this propaganda and have roundly condemned political interference in defence matters. But, such slanted criticism does not in any way help in building up the correct type of public opinion about the country's defence. In the earlier chapters I have shown that there was really no basis for any such criticism. Beyond the general policy that had been laid down that the enemy should be turned out of our territory or further intrusions prevented, no directions regarding operational matters were given either by the Prime Minister or by the Defence Minister and operational decisions were taken by the Military Chiefs themselves. But, after the debacle of 1962, fed by information deliberately leaked out by interested officers, the allegation of political interference was persistent and widespread and the Prime Minister was at pains to explain that "higher direction consisted partly of political decision and partly of operational matters and the political leadership confined itself to the former and did not interfere with the latter". And even if they had done so, there was nothing wrong in it. Because "It is very relevant to realise that modern wars make such a heavy impact on the whole community that it is not possible neatly to categorise the decisions involved as either operational or as matters of political policy. The extremes of the spectrum may be clear but there is a very broad central band where decisions are closely interlocked. Besides, the consequences of any false step will be too serious when the war is being fought on the country's doorsteps, as will be the case in India. Thus, the famous saying attributed to

Clemenceau during the First World War that "war is too serious a matter to be left to Generals."*

I have pointed out in the chapter on "Defence Forces" that it was not a case of too much political interference but in reality of too little of it. The country had no means of knowing whether all that it was paying for was being well-utilised. The assurances given by the Government that the Defence Forces were in fine fettle had been disproved by the developments that took place. It will be good for the defence of the country and for the Defence Forces themselves if people's understanding of defence matters is consciously raised to such a level as would enable the more intelligent amongst them and their representatives in Parliament to take a more healthy and constructive interest in the country's defence problems. It is, therefore, hoped that, following the example of advanced Western democracies, in this country also there would be enough debates in Parliament, amongst Parliamentary study groups, in newspapers and in other Indian societies interested in defence matters and there would be more open talks by the Defence Minister, by the Army Generals, by the civilians and scientists employed in the Defence Ministry, by industrialists, by students of history to develop what is called the politico-military consciousness of the country or in simple words, the defence consciousness, so that the people may have a better understanding of the defence requirements in the context of the country's external and internal policies and its industrial and economic capacity to bear the burden.

There was, therefore, a failure on the part of the Government in not being able to raise this defence consciousness. No doubt, Pandit Nehru's speeches and utterances during the periods 1959 to 1962 gave enough indications of the anxieties he was passing through regarding the aggressive intentions of China. But, what was necessary was to put across to the country in a concrete form what these apprehensions, if they came true—which they were most likely to do—would amount to in the form of the military effort economically, industrially and in manpower, so that the country

*P.V.R. Rao in his article in the *Journal of Defence Studies and Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 1.

could understand what sacrifices it would be called upon to make for such preparations in quick time and what was not possible and hence what losses had to be accepted. But, people were smug in their confidence that the country's defences were impregnable and that the Indian Defence Forces were ready to take on any enemy, though this was far from being true; and so, when the test came, they failed. In the circumstances the people naturally lost trust in the words of the Government. This would not have happened if there was more exchange of information between the Government and Parliament on defence matters.

In giving a politico-military shape to the foreign policy, other things had also to be taken into consideration. As P.V.R. Rao has pointed out: "The build-up of the Armed Forces during peace time should be against a background of approved strategic and operational plans and the latter should be flexible enough to be adjusted to the state of preparedness of the defence forces when action is joined. Modern warfare depends more than ever on industrial production. Maintenance of operations requires a continuous flow of factory products. To frame operational plans ignoring the factors influencing the flow of such supplies and the time factors involved and to complain of "factors beyond control" when plans go awry, can scarcely be justified. In Indian conditions, indigenous production of needed defence supplies, including maintenance requirements, is of paramount importance. The authority responsible for defence policy must be fully associated with the framing of production policy and take it into account in formulating operational strategy."* So, it is necessary to build up industrial production in the country to meet the requirements of the Defence industries which must be able to maintain a continuous flow of the expendible items required during war and which are used up at an alarming rate during operations. That Pandit Nehru was fully aware of this and the drawback of continued reliance on foreign sources for the supply of arms, is borne out by the statement he made in Parliament on November 14, 1962. Explaining the danger inherent in dependence on foreign supplies, he said: "The easiest way is always to order a

*Ibid.

ready-made article. But the easy way is not always a good way. Apart from the continuing difficulty about the lack of foreign exchange, it is not the way to build up the strength of a nation. If we get some weapon today, we have to get ammunition for it all the time and we are completely in the hands of some other country, specially if we have to deal with private suppliers in other countries. The House knows that the arms racket is the worst racket of all; because you need something, they make you pay through the nose....So we were very much against getting arms from private suppliers outside and we decided to build up our own arms industry to manufacture semi-automatic rifles....It is not a question merely of semi-automatic rifles....But this outlook of ours, about manufacturing things ourselves rather than buying them, covered our whole approach to this question. We are manufacturing a great many things in arms today which we did not do previously....How did we make them? The usual manner was that we bought some with the proviso attached that the persons we bought them from would give us the licence and the blueprints to manufacture them here....It is all very well to build a factory here and there but really you want to have a strong industrial background. You cannot, out of a relatively agricultural background, suddenly put up a highly sophisticated factory. All the work we have done, not in the Defence Ministry alone, but all over the country, in our First Five Year Plan, in the Second and in the Third, has been meant to strengthen the nation by making it more modernised, more industrialised and to build up this base out of which you can produce the things you require."

There was yet another drawback which we had to contend with. As the earlier chapters of this narrative would show, so far as the Prime Minister was concerned, from the very beginning, when he started dealing with China, he had apprehensions that China could not be fully trusted though she was professing thousand year old friendship. He knew that in actual fact the two civilisations had been antagonistic to each other for those thousand years; and now that the two economic systems were so much at variance, it was essential for China to humiliate India in the eyes of the non-communist world of Asia and Africa to prove not

only the superiority of Chinese culture but also of Chinese economic system. Similar were the feelings of the Home Minister, Sri G.B. Pant, who was in the saddle for the most part of the crucial period from 1955 to 1961. At least in the Intelligence Bureau and the Home Ministry we had clearly understood the nature and validity of the Prime Minister's apprehensions and, therefore, throughout the period from 1950 to 1962 we had tried to match our efforts to the ultimate test that would inevitably come. But, in the process of doing that, as I have mentioned in the earlier chapters, we met with much resistance from other Ministries and the Defence authorities and it was only through our conviction that finally when the matter would go to the Prime Minister we would get his support and also the realisation of these departments that this would be so that we won through. When the Prime Minister had expressed such apprehensions and a Home Minister of the stature of G.B. Pant also held the same views, then how was it that there was no coordinated action by all the Ministries to make the necessary preparations with the utmost speed to meet this threat. Some coordinating authority that could ensure that all the departments concerned understood the views of the Prime Minister correctly and implemented his suggestions jointly and severally was missing. There should have been no room here for two departments working at cross-purposes. We had often wondered why we should meet with so much opposition from others when we were implementing the directions of the Prime Ministers. Probably the Prime Minister was reluctant to share his views and inner apprehensions with a large number of people, because, unfortunately, as we are placed in this country, even people in responsible positions are so apt to talk, that these views might consciously or unconsciously be communicated to others and become generally known thereby hardening China's attitude while the Government of India was still trying to settle the dispute peacefully to save the ultimate conflict which would be too serious a matter. And, as both Mankekar and Khera have pointed out, the improvements which were effected in the Armed Forces during the period 1956-59, were Pakistan-oriented, and not much was done to meet the more serious threat from the north—a threat

which was much more insidious and of a permanent nature. And the Army Headquarters continued to hold the view that at no stage would they be able to match their strength against the Chinese and, therefore, the problem was best left to the politicians to deal with at the diplomatic level. Here, therefore, was a gap in translating the highly relevant thinking of the Prime Minister into a politico-military shape to give new dimensions to the Defence for formulating their own strategical concepts and fixing new targets.

At the same time, one would have expected the initiative to have come from India's Defence leaders also to try to understand the forces that were developing and working against India and point out the dangers to the Government and make proper recommendations. It does not behove them to take shelter under the excuse that the Government did not give them the objectives. As P.V.R. Rao has pointed out, "The world over there is always a conflict between military leaders and the civil government regarding defence preparations. Military leaders complain that they are rarely given a specific answer about objectives; if objectives are given, they can advise on the strength of the Defence Forces needed and the manner in which they should be equipped; and on these technical matters, their advice should be decisive."* But, as has been pointed out by Rao, this is not such a simple matter. "The Defence Forces always ask for a three to five times superiority over the opposing forces while undertaking an offensive; but when required to stay in a defensive role, they would not accept the same odds." (In fact, at no time during the operations in Nyamkachu, Sela or Walong were the odds three to five times against the Indian Forces.) "Besides, there is normally a time lag of as much as five years between an estimation of the threat and initiation of defence measures and the time when these are put in operation and by that time changes inevitably occur in the command, with new commanders bringing in new ideas which vary considerably from those which had formed the basis of the preparations. This underlines the need of group effort and of thorough discussion between the Defence Minister, the civilian administrators and the Service Chiefs and this should not be left

* Ibid.

to the understanding of a single person, however eminent and knowledgeable he may be".* We now see why Pandit Nehru's apprehensions did not take the necessary politico-military shape lower down. This was because the necessary dialogue did not take place between the leaders of the Government and the military leaders to allow the foreign policy to take concrete shape in the form of defence targets and preparations.

The same was the weakness even in the civilian machinery working under the Government. If the Home Ministry understood the threat and its urgency, the Finance did not. If the Defence understood it, the Transport Ministry did not. The External Affairs Ministry considered it an intrusion on the part of other Ministries to have any say in their affairs, though the repercussions of an external policy would invariably be felt not only in the field of internal law and order but also in the industrial, labour and economic fields.

So it would be wrong to dispose of this matter by simply saying that in respect of China, India's foreign policy as such failed; in actual fact it did not. In talks with the Chinese we noticed that from the top to the bottom, that is from Chou En-lai to the Chinese Commanders on the border, they talked exactly the same language; but we talked differently at different levels. This would mean that whereas there was thorough political indoctrination down to the lowest decision-making level in China, there was lack of this so far as India was concerned. Indoctrination in this case does not mean indoctrination in a particular ideology but the proper understanding of the foreign, politico-military and the defence policy which this country was following. This lack of united thinking manifested itself in the lack of united effort also, because without common thinking and understanding, there could be no united effort. As contrasted to India, in China there was no such schizophrenia. The country's aim was clear, and that aim was to be achieved by friendly persuasion, by deceipt, by intimidation and by the actual use of force and a combination of these tactics at different times as was suitable in the given circumstances; and so the country's strategy was developed

*Ibid.

simultaneously on all those four lines giving much room for manoeuvrability. And all this was understood at all decision-making levels from the top which planned the strategy to the lowest level which executed it in the field.

Why was it that India did not have the same range of thinking and the same system as was prevalent in China, and which proved to be more successful than the system followed in India? This is because of the legacy which 200 years of colonial rule had left in India. Even before the British came, for nearly six hundred years of Pathan and Mughal rule, India as such had no real foreign policy. Whilst the countries of Europe and even China were formulating their foreign policies of expansion through trade, through the propagation of religion and culture and by outright conquest, India's outlook was then confined only to its own shores and the entire policy consisted of the Mughals fighting the Rajputs or the Sikhs or the Marathas and vice versa. Their vision never extended to India's spheres of influence in South-East Asia, West Asia and even Central Asia and even in such peripheral countries as Tibet, Bhutan, Burma or Nepal. So, during the preceding six or seven centuries, when other independent countries of Europe and even China and Japan were formulating forward-looking foreign policies and learning from both successes and failures, India had no foreign policy at all and consequently no defence policy also. Every time an invader came from the North-West, India fell, and when the British took over, the foreign and the defence policies were made in London and not in Calcutta or Delhi. This policy primarily served the interests of the metropolitan country, that is Great Britain, and not that of India. And when Indian interest clashed with that of the British, the former naturally took second place. When we became independent, we did not inherit a traditional foreign policy linking it with a defence policy and also with the internal, economic and industrial policies in India. Our civil servants, extremely competent in their own fields of work, were working on the old colonial lines and did not have any experience in respect of foreign policy and had yet to develop a proper understanding of the strategy that India had to follow in the implementation

of her foreign policy in respect of her neighbours.

It was very fortunate for India that the first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had, for nearly twenty years before Independence, studied foreign affairs thoroughly, had travelled widely and had developed a proper understanding of the various international pressures at work at any given time and could look beyond them to the future against a thorough background of history and was in a position to formulate a foreign policy which, whilst safeguarding and furthering India's interests, would not encroach upon the legitimate interests of other countries. As Mahatma Gandhi's disciple, he could not think of India selfishly but only as a part of the larger world in which the interests of the various nations had to be synthesised into one all-enveloping policy, which would secure the simultaneous advancement of all of them so that they all formed the "One World" in which we lived. In fact, in this case the "Master" learnt the foreign policy from the "Disciple" and not the other way about.* So, when independence came, Pandit Nehru stepped into the field of foreign relations like the most experienced statesmen of the advanced countries and framed a most sophisticated policy which, though at first ridiculed by many of the major powers, ultimately proved its inherent worth and came to be recognised by more and more countries as the only valid policy not only for India or for the underdeveloped countries but for the whole world.

But, our colonial system of administration could not size up to this highly developed foreign policy and could not develop enough sophistication in translating that policy into the field of practical policies at home. So, it was not the foreign policy which had failed but the colonial system prevalent both in civil and military administrations which could not adjust itself to the new demands made of them by the very fact that India, a country of nearly 500 millions of people, possessing a very ancient culture, had become really independent after nearly 800 years of foreign rule in one form or the other.

So, 1962 saw a failure of our decision-making system which India had inherited from the colonial days. It was not the

*M. Chalapathi Rau, *Gandhi and Nehru.*

question of failure of a person here or a person there, it was the system as a whole which failed. This system did not allow the very sophisticated foreign policy of the Prime Minister to be translated into the politico-military spheres, with the result that the structural aspects of decision-making were neglected. "There was no continuous appraisal of threats to our security by joint teams of civil and military officers under the guidance of political leaders and there was no consciousness that unless threats were foreseen well ahead it would be difficult to react to the swift politico-military moves by the enemy. Failure took place in the fields of threat perception, allowing for sufficient lead time for our preparedness, reducing the time required for response, contingency planning and awareness of international strategic trends. There was no professional debate between our political leaders, the civil services and the military officers with the result that each group went its own way with its own ideas and estimation of threat and often at cross-purposes with each other. There was also no professionalism in the debates in Parliament with the result that few constructive ideas regarding defence came out of them and there was no effort worth the name to make the people defence conscious."*

Unfortunately, the lessons of 1962 do not seem to have been learnt properly yet. The old colonial system of administration still prevails, in spite of the criticisms of successive Prime Ministers and Home Ministers that this system was impeding even internal development and required to be radically changed to conform to the needs of a big, independent, developing democracy which in turn creates new problems in both internal and external fields. The administration of India has remained static too long. A system which was introduced nearly one hundred years ago for the specific purpose of maintaining order for the benefit of the British Government and to collect taxes, and which had carried out its tasks most creditably, has taken such a hold on the people that even the idea of any change in the system is anathema to many people and more so among the Services themselves. Such a well-established system naturally dies hard, but unless this system

*K. Subramanyam, *India's Defence Problem.*

is thoroughly overhauled, it will continue to be inadequate to meet the new challenges that the country may have to face in the future and which may be more serious than any that the country has faced so far. Even as late as 1960, thirteen years after Independence, we find Pandit Nehru sadly commenting that "India was changing very rapidly and these problems could not be looked upon in the old way. Unfortunately, our procedures and our Government apparatus were fashioned not for the rapidly developing society but for a more or less static society. That apparatus was organised well for that type of society, but when we want to do things quickly, they come in the way. There are too many checks and counter-checks which, though meant for bringing about security and protection, make matters worse."

It is this system which has to be completely changed before any marked improvement in the implementation of Government policies can be expected.

30 The Future

IN THE FIRST FOUR chapters of this book we traced the historical developments in Tibet from the earliest times up to 1950 and came to the irresistible conclusion that Tibet enjoyed *de facto* independence at least from 1912 when the Tibetans ousted the Chinese from their territory by armed action and declared their independence. Even though the British, for their own self-interest, continued to recognise some tenuous form of Chinese suzerainty, that did not prevent them from entering into treaties with the Tibetans independently of the Chinese. During the Second World War, when the Chinese, having lost all their outlets to the sea and being hard-pressed by the Japanese, wanted to open a route through Tibet to receive the much-needed supplies from India and the Tibetan Kashag refused permission, the British, though they were allies of China against Japan, upheld Tibet's right to do so. This fact only highlights Tibet's independence. That status was also upheld by the International Commission of Jurists in its report to the United Nations on "The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law" in 1959. The Commission came to the conclusion that "Tibet's position on the expulsion of the Chinese in 1912 can be fairly described as one of *de facto* independence and there are, as explained, strong legal grounds for thinking that any form of local subservience to China had vanished. It is, therefore, submitted that 1911-12 marked the re-emergence of Tibet as a fully sovereign State, independent in fact and in law of Chinese control."

Even in 1950 when the Chinese army entered North-Eastern Tibet, in the protest note which the Government of India sent to China, it stressed the need of a peaceful settlement of the Tibetan problem "by peaceful negotiations adjusting the legitimate Tibetan claim of autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty".

It has been explained earlier how at this time India was in no position to assist the Tibetans militarily to keep the Chinese out. Also India's unilateral renunciation in 1954 of the trade and other rights was done with the best intention of denying the Chinese any excuse to destroy Tibetan autonomy on the plea of the existence of a foreign power on the Tibetan soil.

According to the International Commission of Jurists, Tibet surrendered her independence by signing in 1951 the "Agreement on Peaceful Measures for the Liberation of Tibet". But even according to this Agreement the Chinese conceded a number of special rights and gave a number of undertakings to maintain Tibetan autonomy, e.g. (*i*) the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the CPG; (*ii*) that the Central authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet; (*iii*) that the Central authorities will not alter the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama; (*iv*) that officials of various ranks shall hold office as before; (*v*) that the traditional status, functions and powers of the Panchen Lama shall be maintained; (*vi*) that religious beliefs, customs and habits of the Tibetan people will be respected and Lamaism and the monasteries will be protected; (*vii*) that no change will be made in the sources of income of the monasteries; (*viii*) that in matters relating to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the Central authorities; (*ix*) that the local Government of Tibet should carry out the reforms of its own accord; and when the people raise demands for reforms, they will be settled by means of consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet.

As explained earlier, this agreement looked not too unsatisfactory on paper as it conceded Tibet's right to internal autonomy in a big measure. The status and functions of the Dalai Lama were to remain as before and there would be no change in the position and status of the officials and other Government institutions; religious beliefs were to be respected and monasteries would be protected and would not be deprived of their sources of income; no reforms would be forced from the top and these were to be carried out by the Tibetan Government with the consent of the

people. If the Chinese were sincere about this Agreement, there was a bright prospect of adjustment of the respective claims of the Chinese regarding their suzerainty over Tibet and of the Tibetans regarding their autonomy.

At first the Chinese proceeded cautiously and tried to infiltrate communist ideas and Chinese institutions indirectly rather than making a direct attack on Tibetan beliefs and institutions. These indirect methods included reforms to aid the unprivileged strata of society, infiltration of Tibetans considered to be loyal to the Chinese in Government departments, and, most important of all, breaking the Church's absolute control over education by opening a large number of non-denominational schools to bring them within the reach of the common people. It was difficult for the Tibetan Government to object to these reforms and so there was hardly any local resistance to them. But this policy of moderation was adopted during the first few years chiefly for the purpose of securing Chinese survival in Tibet without giving any cause for Tibetan revolt or foreign intervention whilst the Chinese were still completing their road link from China to Lhasa and trunk routes to the different regions, and building up their strong points and fortifications all over the country to counteract effectively any Tibetan rebellion. This policy of moderation may also be traced to the unilateral Indian renunciation of all privileges including the stationing of troops in the Trade Agencies, demonstrating that India had no hostile intentions against China in Tibet.

But immediately after securing the total elimination of all foreign influence from Tibet, China increased her pressure on Tibet and, from 1955 onwards, went on intensifying it for the next three years in varying degrees. There was no need any longer to postpone the execution of her real plan to integrate Tibet completely with China. This was sought to be achieved by introducing large-scale programmes of education and indoctrination under Chinese communist teachers and officials, taking away forcibly or by persuasion a large number of Tibetan youth to indoctrinate them in institutions in China, practically securing a strangle-hold on all Tibetan trade and commerce by channelling all transactions

through branches of the Bank of China and slowly undermining the economic position and the authority of the monasteries. There was also a large influx of Han settlers, under official patronage, in both the river valleys and the uplands and this soon assumed threatening proportions.

The self-confident Chinese then started directly interfering with the Dalai Lama's administration. The Dalai Lama was forced to agree to the establishment of the Preparatory Committee for the creation of a Tibetan Autonomous Region, which would be completely subservient to the Central Government and in the name of which Tibet was divided into three parts and the Dalai Lama's authority was limited to only one of them. Having consolidated her position in Tibet, China started probing the frontier regions both to test India's military preparations and intentions and to put India on the defensive by alluding to Chinese claims over India's eastern territories thus preventing India from interfering in any way in the implementation of the Chinese plans in Tibet. This increased pressure by the Chinese to alter the very basis of Tibetan life led, during the years 1956-59, to armed uprisings in various parts of Tibet. Though the Chinese reacted viciously, the Tibetan resistance continued. In order to make a show of moderation, particularly after the promise Chou En-lai had made in New Delhi in 1956, a significant proportion of the Chinese Army was withdrawn from Lhasa and an official statement was issued to the effect that no attempt would be made to introduce any radical reforms for at least five years.

But, having disarmed suspicions for the time-being and being conscious of her superior military strength as compared to India's, China soon brought back to Tibet bigger forces and proceeded relentlessly to demolish everything historical or traditional which pointed to Tibetan autonomy and to assimilate the Tibetan population in the Han race, thus obliterating the existence of the Tibetans as a separate cultural entity. Tibetan resistance increased, large numbers of Tibetans took to the hills as guerrillas, and ultimately the Dalai Lama was forced to flee Tibet and take refuge in India. This fitted in with the sinister Chinese plan to incorporate Tibet into China and the Chinese used this opportunity to

destroy all vestiges of Tibetan autonomy and its link with the past.

The Dalai Lama repudiated the Agreement on March 11, 1959, on the ground that the Chinese had violated the undertaking which they had given to maintain the existing political system in Tibet and the status and functions of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, to protect the freedom of the monasteries and to refrain from compulsion in matters of reforms in Tibet. That he was entitled to repudiate the Agreement has been upheld by the International Commission of Jurists which has held that "Tibet surrendered her independence by signing in 1951 the Agreement on Peaceful Measures for the Liberation of Tibet. Under that Agreement the Central Government of the Chinese Peoples' Republic gave a number of undertakings; among them promise to maintain the existing political system of Tibet; to maintain the status and functions of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama; to protect freedom of religion and monasteries and to refrain from compulsion in the matter of reforms in Tibet. The Committee found that these and other undertakings had been violated by the Chinese Peoples' Republic and that the Government of Tibet was entitled to repudiate the Agreement as it did on March 11, 1959."

When in 1950 the Tibetan question had been raised in the United Nations, as it was hoped that the dispute between the two countries could yet be settled by peaceful means, the Security Council had deferred the discussion without going into the merits of the Tibetan charge of aggression against China. The promise which the Chinese made in the Sino-Tibetan Agreement to respect Tibetan autonomy, the status of the Dalai Lama and the autonomy of the monasteries was, as subsequent events proved, meant to hoodwink the United Nations and give China the excuse to induct an unlimited number of troops into Tibet. Having achieved that aim, China proceeded to treat the Agreement as only a scrap of paper. Her intention clearly was to completely subjugate Tibet and not only to make it an integral part of China, which it had never been in the past, but also forcibly to change the composition of the population, so that Tibet for ever would lose

her personality. And China proceeded to achieve this end through the worst forms of repression, coercion, terror and inhuman atrocities.

The International Commission of Jurists during its investigation on the charges of genocide by the Chinese in Tibet and the destruction of fundamental rights, examined a large number of documents both of Chinese and Tibetan origin and also examined a large number of refugees from Tibet who had left the country to escape Chinese oppression. This examination brought in light horrors perpetrated by the Chinese, the magnitude of which no one could even dream of. It was proved that thousands of Tibetans had been killed not by military action but individually and deliberately; that they had been killed without trial on suspicion of opposing Communism or hoarding money or simply because of their position in society or for no reason at all. But mainly and fundamentally they had been killed because they would not renounce their religion. Hundreds had been not only shot dead but beaten to death, burnt alive, drowned, starved, strangled, beheaded, hanged, scalded, buried alive or disembowelled. These killings had been done in public with the victims' relations, friends and neighbours watching the process. The Lamas were specially persecuted and they were accused of being exploiters; they were humiliated and tortured. Chinese rode them like horses and harnessed them to ploughs. Many other tortures and cruelties, too inhuman and abominable to mention, were also perpetrated on them. Large numbers of Tibetans were imprisoned, rounded up and taken away to unknown destinations. Great numbers died from the brutalities and privations of forced labour; and many who could not escape to India committed suicide in despair and misery. When the men were driven to take refuge in the mountains as guerrillas, the women and children in the villages were killed indiscriminately. Thousands of children from ages of fifteen to a few months were snatched away from their parents and taken away apparently to China to be "properly" educated in Marxist principles. The parents never saw them again. The Chinese destroyed hundreds of monasteries either by physically wrecking them or by killing the Lamas and

sending the monks to labour camps, ordering the monks under pain of death to break their vows of celibacy, and using the empty monastery buildings and temples as army barracks and stores.

The Commission, therefore, held that the Chinese were guilty of committing "Genocide" within the terms of Article II of the "Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide" and they were also guilty of committing crime under international law independently of the Convention.

The Commission also examined evidence in relation to human rights within the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as proclaimed by the United Nations in order to determine how far the Chinese respected the fundamental rights and liberties of the Tibetans. The evidence secured by it was so overwhelming that it came to the conclusion that the Chinese authorities in Tibet had violated every human right in respect of belief, faith, marriage, children, culture, work, food, movement and religion. The Committee's findings were limited up to 1959. But China has committed even worse atrocities on the Tibetans since then. The Tibetans have no right even to live unless they blindly and like sheep carry out the dictates of their Chinese overlords in every aspect of their life. And even if they submit to all these demands they would yet be accused of mental lapses and meet death or cruel forms of torture. Even the Russian Radio has alleged that "Tibet now is a gigantic prison camp". The Chinese have spared no methods, however ruthless they might be, to eliminate the Tibetan personality completely and eradicate Buddhist faith from Tibet and assimilate the Tibetans completely in the Han nationality. The greatest irony is that in their own country, of which they have been masters ever since the dawn of history, the Tibetans, forming a highly civilised race with no affinity with the Chinese, are being treated worse than flocks of sheep or cattle and forced to live a life dictated by the foreign invaders, a life which is completely devoid of all sense of morality, justice and faith according to all canons of civilised behaviour. The Tibetans are no better than slaves in their own country living a life of untold misery and humiliation and suffering

tortures no civilised nation can inflict on a helpless people.

No doubt, some eighty thousand Tibetans of all classes and ages have migrated to India and considerable numbers to Nepal and Bhutan but two and a half million people or the remainder of those who have not been killed or deported or who have not taken refuge outside Tibet, still remain under inhuman conditions imposed on them by the foreign invaders. The Chinese ruthlessly trampled on the promises which they had made of respecting not only Tibet's political autonomy but also the status of the Dalai Lama and the autonomy of the monasteries, and of protecting religion. They have, as found by the International Commission of Jurists, committed inhuman tortures and cruelties, some of them too vile to be narrated, on the peace loving, religious minded, simple Tibetans. Even the Panchen Lama, who was used as a stooge for some years after the Dalai Lama's escape, has been demoted and taken to a labour camp in China. No one knows what fate awaits him.

When the Tibetan question came up before the United Nations in 1959, though the report of the International Commission of Jurists was not yet out, the UN took cognizance of the state of affairs in Tibet from other material available to it, and on October 21, 1959, adopted a resolution which called for respect for the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people and for their distinctive cultural and religious life.

The Tibetan question came up again before the General Assembly in December, 1961. The world had by then been shocked and astounded by the revelations made by the International Commission of Jurists. So this time the General Assembly not only called for the restoration of human rights and freedoms but also the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination.

After a gap of four years, the Tibetan question again came up before the General Assembly in 1965 and on this occasion the Assembly, reaffirming its resolutions of 1959 and 1961 on the question of Tibet, renewed its call for the cessation of all practices which deprived the Tibetan people of the human rights and fundamental freedoms which they had always enjoyed.

On the first two occasions India had remained neutral and

Russia had voted against the resolution. On the third occasion, India voted in favour of the resolution and Soviet Russia remained neutral.

India is the champion of suppressed people's rights in all countries of the world. Ever since Mahatma Gandhi fought for civil rights of the Indians in South Africa, India has been in the forefront of this struggle and has not forgotten the oppressed people wherever they are. India has severed diplomatic relations with South Africa and Portugal and has refused to recognise Rhodesia for the same reason. But even the worst form of apartheid enforced in South Africa pales into insignificance when compared to the atrocities which the Chinese have committed and are continuing to commit in Tibet. The South African Whites have deprived the Indian and African people of many of the rights which they should enjoy as citizens of that country and they have been treated abominably in being forced to live in certain areas and not to transgress into those inhabited by the Whites. This has received universal condemnation and India has, for the last 50 years, fought relentlessly against this apartheid policy. But the Chinese have gone much further and have destroyed everything which could be called Tibetan, their religion and their culture—a very old-established and developed religion with a very high philosophy, professed by many independent countries of Asia and highly revered throughout the world and a culture which is as old as the Chinese culture itself; and they have deprived the Tibetans of all fundamental rights and freedoms and are perpetrating inhuman atrocities on them.

India has fought against colonialism whether of the British, the French, the Dutch, the Belgians, the Germans or the Portuguese. In their own country, the Indians fought against British colonialism for over 50 years to gain independence. With the dawn of Indian independence came the end of the British Empire, the greatest empire ever established in the world, and most of the countries in Asia and Africa regained their independence. Some of these countries have no known history and even their existence came to be known only as a result of adventurist tours undertaken

by European missionaries. Similarly, the French Empire disappeared and a large number of nations in Asia and Africa became independent. The Dutch and the Belgian colonies in Asia and Africa also followed suit. Only the Portuguese colonies remained in India and Africa. India even used force to liberate Goa, Daman and Diu from the Portuguese and has consistently opposed Portuguese colonialism still existing in Africa. But even the worst traits of Portuguese colonialism cannot bear comparison with the forms of colonialism which the Chinese have imposed on Tibet.

Therefore, both for the sake of restoring the fundamental liberties of the Tibetan people and destroying Chinese colonialism, India, the great champion of human liberties and anti-colonialism, must raise her voice. How can India shut her eyes to the abominable cruelties that are being perpetrated on her neighbours, who have more in common with the Indians than with any other people in the world, when she fights for the rights of people in far off countries with whom there is no racial, linguistic and religious affinity and whom even the general masses of India do not know. It is not suggested here that India should not fight for the liberties and independence of all these people. India must, and she has been doing it not only since she became independent but even earlier all through the period when she was agitating for her own political emancipation. Indeed for Mahatma Gandhi as well as for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Indian independence meant nothing unless it helped to secure the independence of all other suppressed nations.

So, a radical reorientation of India's policy with regard to Tibet is necessary in keeping with her professed principles of support to the people of all countries which are under colonial subjugation. India should fight for the right of self-determination for the Tibetans and the protection of her religion, culture and personality which the Chinese are out to destroy for ever. Following the example she has set in case of all other anti-colonial struggles, India should take the lead in galvanising the United Nations into action for protecting the Tibetans from complete extermination as a race and as a cultural and religious entity.

Pandit Nehru had always been extremely anxious that the Tibetan personality and Tibetan autonomy should be maintained. It was in order to secure Chinese agreement to respect Tibetan institutions and customs that Pandit Nehru voluntarily agreed to the termination of all Indian rights in Tibet without resort to any overt political pressure or military action. Following India, Nepal also surrendered in 1956 whatever special privileges she had enjoyed in Tibet for over half a century. India could not have militarily prevented the Chinese occupation of Tibet. She had already, as a legacy from the British, accepted Chinese suzerainty. She acquiesced in the signing of the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951, though according to previous Sino-British treaties, China could not enter into any treaty with Tibet without the consent of the British Government. All this was done in good faith to secure for the Tibetans the autonomy which they had enjoyed throughout history and to protect their cultural and religious freedom. Indeed Pandit Nehru had, as early as 1953, refused to deport from India Tibetans who had taken refuge in this country even in spite of much pressure from the Chinese. When the Tibetan revolt broke out and the Dalai Lama had to flee Tibet and seek shelter in India, followed by an unending stream of refugees, Pandit Nehru, in spite of the criticism by the Chinese fellow travellers in India, not only refused to turn them back but extended to them such economic help as was possible in India's own straitened circumstances. In doing so, Pandit Nehru incurred the ire of the Chinese who not only became hostile but actual enemies to the extent of invading Indian territory in 1962.

India has suffered much for the sake of the Tibetans in order to uphold one of the most precious international principles of giving shelter to political refugees. It was a wise step not to have supported the resolution passed by the General Assembly in October 1959 because till then all hopes of re-establishing the Dalai Lama in Tibet and restoring the previous position had not been lost. Even in 1961, India abstained from voting hoping still to be able to bridge the gulf. But the events of 1962 proved how insubstantial that hope was. So, in 1965, India no longer abstained but voted for the resolution in the UN for the restoration of

human rights and liberties in Tibet. As the years rolled by, the full picture of the devilish design of the Chinese unfolded and it is now before the eyes of the people of the world in all its naked horror. The time has come for India to reconsider her attitude in this matter. Instead of simply supporting a resolution brought by others, as she had done in 1965, she may herself move such a resolution not only for the restoration of the fundamental rights and the liberties of the Tibetan people, but also for recognising their right of self-determination.* She should set about resolutely to secure support for that resolution from as many countries of the world as possible including Soviet Russia and Eastern European countries by diplomatic moves and by sounding other countries and doing the necessary groundwork. India must not let the Tibetans be forgotten. If that happens, it will for ever remain a slur on India's national conscience.

We now come to the question of the future status of Tibet. I have already quoted from the findings of the International Commission of Jurists that, after 1912 and till 1950, Tibet was a *de facto* independent country and the Chinese had absolutely no control over it. In 1951, Tibet surrendered its sovereignty on signing the Sino-Tibetan Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. But as contrary to the provisions of that Agreement, the Chinese broke all the promises which they had made to respect Tibetan autonomy and deprived the Tibetans of their fundamental human rights, the Dalai Lama, with the full consent of the Kashag, repudiated that Agreement in March, 1959; and so from that date Tibet could be deemed to have resumed the status of an independent country which it enjoyed prior to 1950.

A great deal of hair-splitting has been done on the question of suzerainty or sovereignty. The status of the suzerain had been invented by the British whose main purpose was to prevent Czarist Russia from exercising any influence in Tibet by acknowledging from before that China was the suzerain. The fight was not between Great Britain and China or Great Britain and Tibet or

* On March 16, 1970, the Indian delegate made a statement in the United Nations Human Rights Commission accusing the Chinese of depriving the Tibetans of all human rights and destroying their religion and culture.

even between Tibet and China but between British and Russian imperialism and decisions were taken and treaties were entered into by one country or the other for safeguarding its own self-interest and also to checkmate any ulterior moves of the other. India's interest was not then the point at issue but it was the interest of the metropolitan country, i.e. Great Britain that really mattered. Moreover, British trade interests in China were so important that it meant little to them to acknowledge formal Chinese suzerainty over Tibet in return for Chinese goodwill so that their trade might flow uninterruptedly. But the fact that the British invented this suzerainty only as a make-believe is proved from the way the British treated Tibet as an independent country for all practical purposes, and entered into independent treaty relationship with her without any reference to China.

Even if the suzerainty was real, it must be recognised that in the olden times, the powers of the suzerain or the emperor or the *Rajadhiraj* had always been vague and the control which the central authority exercised over its outlying dominions was nominal. All that the suzerain aimed at was an acknowledgment of his supremacy. This, in no way, affected the independence or the autonomy of these countries. The idea of extending one's kingdom to make an empire or to establish a unitary form of administration was a development of modern ages. Even during the time of the Mughal rule in India, once the independent princes acknowledged the Mughal emperor's paramountcy, they were left in peace to administer their territories in much the same way as they used to do before without any interference. This form of loose relationship had existed between Tibet, Mongolia and China. Sometimes for its own self-protection Tibet had acknowledged the paramountcy of the Mongols or of the Chinese, whilst the latter in their turn had acknowledged the paramountcy of the Dalai Lama in all their religious and spiritual matters. When the Chinese Army had on occasions entered Tibet or when the Tibetan Army had entered the Chinese territory in the past, this relationship did not change. Even the recognition by the British of the nominal suzerainty of China over Tibet, in no way, converted the latter into a province of China nor

deprived the Tibetans of their existence as a separate nation.

What after all is the test of a nation? What forms a nation? What keeps the nation together? There are many considerations which bring tribes and peoples from far-flung areas together to form a nation. The first consideration is, of course, the race. This is one of the bonds which keeps different people together even with different languages, religions, etc. On the other hand, where there is no racial similarity it is difficult to assimilate one group into the other, e.g. the difficulty which the Negroes and the Whites are facing in America. But ethnologists have found that the Tibetans belong to the same tall dolicocephalous race which is of great antiquity and which is quite distinct from the "Yellow Man" which is the origin of the Chinese race. Indeed, the Tibetans, the ancient Turks and the Mongols belong to one stock. No doubt, other types are also seen, particularly in the border areas by admixture with neighbouring peoples and by the absorption of refugees, outcastes, etc.; but racially the Tibetans belong to a completely separate stock from the Chinese. Therefore, on this score it will be ludicrous for the Chinese to claim that the Tibetans belong to the Han race.

The next consideration is of language. Tibetan language is as different from Chinese as Sanskrit is from Chinese. In fact, the Tibetan language was derived from Pali which was one of the forms which Sanskrit had taken in the early years of the Christian era. Like Sanskrit and Pali, Tibetan has an alphabet, whereas the Chinese script is based on ideography. From the seventh century when the Tibetan script was borrowed from India, it has shown no change and the forms of letters and orthography are virtually the same as they were at the time of their introduction. Therefore, on the score of language if any country can claim close affinity with Tibet that would be India, whereas China would be the farthest from it.

Next comes the nature of the country itself, because this also determines the character and culture of the people. The Tibetan plateau, described as the roof of the world, is twelve to fourteen thousand feet high and the Tibetans, as a rule, have all the characteristics of the people who inhabit high table-lands. On the

other hand, the Chinese are essentially a people of the plains and it is the great river valleys and the coastal areas where the thickest concentration of Chinese population is seen. Naturally, the nature of the country inhabited by different peoples determines their dress, clothing, food, etc., and the tsampa-eating Tibetans are quite different in these habits from the rice-eating Chinese.

We may now examine social customs to see whether there is any similarity. In this respect, the custom of marriage and family life are most important. Whereas the Tibetans could be called polyandrous, the Chinese are polygamous. In this polyandry the Tibetans resemble some of the tribes in the hill areas of northern India and also some as far south as Karnatak. On this score also, therefore, there is no similarity. Literacy in Tibet had always been high, much higher than in China before the advent of the Communists. In Tibet, education was chiefly imparted in the monasteries under the Lamas and consisted more of teaching in the scriptures than in general reading. On the other hand, the Chinese form of schooling was quite different and was in the shape of general schools concerned more with materialistic subjects. No doubt the landlord-tenant system existed both in Tibet and in China. But this system was prevalent in India also and was similar to the feudal system which was prevalent in most parts of the old world before feudalism faded away.

We come to the question of religion and philosophy. The Tibetans follow a highly developed form of Tantrik Buddhism, with a very old and well-developed philosophy, not very dissimilar to the Hindu Upanishads and the Tibetan Jataka stories take more after the Indian Puranas. It could not be otherwise, because Tantrik Buddhism was taken into Tibet from India by several great Indian teachers. The great places of pilgrimage for the Tibetans are all in India—Varanasi, Gaya, Sanchi, etc. and none in China. On the other hand, the Chinese follow Confucianism or Taoism which has got no spiritual basis but is an enunciation of social laws. The great difference between the two is that the Tibetans acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, God; the Chinese do not. Hence in this respect, also, there is absolutely no similarity between the Buddhism of Tibet and the Confucianism

of China. Moreover, it was Buddhism from Tibet that penetrated deep into China and also Japan and made a firm base in Mongolia; there was no movement of the faith in the reverse direction.

As regards literature and art, Tibetan literature is mostly based on scriptures with some folk songs thrown in. On the other hand, the Chinese literature is purely materialistic and has not got any spiritual themes. Tibet has borrowed both from China and India for its artistic development; but the Indian influence is more pronounced in every aspect of Tibetan art. However, whatever was borrowed from outside was adapted to suit native Tibetan character with the result that this became strikingly original and homogeneous.

In the field of social organisation also the Church, represented through the monasteries, played a most important part in Tibet. In fact, the very institution of the Dalai Lama, placed the Church above the secular authority and, in every sphere of governmental work, the Church and the secular administration were concurrently represented. This is quite unlike China where there is no Church and, therefore, there is no influence of religion on the administration of the country. That being so, the forms of government which prevailed in Tibet and China were also vastly different, and Tibet's system of administration was entirely original developed over several centuries of experimentation.

Looking at the nationality question from every angle, it passes one's comprehension how the Chinese can claim the Tibetans to be a part and parcel of the Han race. Excepting the fact that Tibet has an undemarcated and undefined border with China, there is no ground for raising this claim. But then Tibet has its border with India and Nepal also and, before the Chinese conquered Turkestan, had a border with that country as well.

No doubt, all these considerations go a long way to determine what should be the constituents of a nation. And it does not necessarily follow that because these common affinities exist, two sets of people will form a nation or that barriers of race, language or religion are insurmountable obstacles in the way of consolidating different peoples into a nation. Nations have been

formed by people having different languages (as in Switzerland and India), with different religions (as in Indonesia and India), and with different ethnic strains (as in Russia, India and even Great Britain). Some other consideration has proved more powerful and has surmounted all the differences and bound people together to form a nation. Also it has not always happened that all people talking the same language will form the same nation, e.g. England, the United States, Canada, etc. or Germany and Austria. Religion also does not unify all people into one nation. There are so many Christian, Muslim and Buddhist countries in this world. Nor does race—otherwise Sweden, Norway and Denmark would form one nation and so would the Arabs.

What then would be the ultimate test of a nation? This, as declared by the great jurist Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, is "the will of the people to live together". That is the ultimate test. Certainly ethnological affinities, religious bonds, linguistic similarities all help, but these by themselves do not go to form a nation unless the people themselves decide to live together. This will to live together may come due to reasons of trade, commerce, defence, ideology, etc., but finally, this is what welds different people together and forms a nation.

When we apply this test, we find that there never has been any Tibetan will to form a nation with China. If one goes into centuries of Tibetan history, one finds that the Tibetans had always fought the Chinese and though China, being a much bigger country, had on some occasions been able to overcome Tibetan resistance, there never had been in the past an acknowledgment by the Tibetans that they were a part of the Chinese race or the expression of any desire that they wanted to merge their personality with that of the Chinese. That was evident in 1912 when the Tibetans ultimately threw off even the very thin bond of Chinese suzerainty, and that was apparent in 1950 when the Tibetan Army faced the Chinese army, though the result was a foregone conclusion. This has been in the forefront throughout the period of Chinese occupation since 1950, with the Tibetans strenuously and bitterly resisting all Chinese attempts to forcibly assimilate them in the Han race, which ultimately led to the Tibetan revolt of 1959

and the departure from Tibet not only of the Dalai Lama and practically all members of his Cabinet but a hundred thousand Tibetans of all classes who would rather migrate to a foreign land than submit to Han domination. And thousands are still coming away in spite of all the restrictions which the Chinese have put on them.

Richardson in his book, *A Short History of Tibet*, stresses the point that the Tibetans have never recognised any affinity with the Chinese. Commenting on the long history of their struggle against the Chinese and the fact that even at present a hundred thousand Tibetans have migrated from Tibet rather than submit to the Chinese attempt to assimilate them, Richardson says: "From this story, the Tibetans emerge as a people deeply conscious of their separateness and resenting foreign intrusion into their way of life; devoted to preserving their peculiar culture, institutions, and above all their religion; united by sharing unquestioningly the same ideas rather than by being fitted into any close administrative system; not covetously or aggressively inclined towards their neighbours but seeking to maintain their own rights by stubborn persistence rather than by violence; more interested in the reality of independence than in the show of it. For 1,300 years they succeeded in preserving a purely Tibetan form of government, changing and developing to meet different circumstances but always containing elements and ideas which can be traced back to the sixth century.

"Tibet with its tiny peaceful population could so easily have been allowed to live on under remote Chinese control, and to develop on its own lines, preserving those qualities and differences which made its civilisation valuable to the rest of the world, without constituting the faintest threat to China. But the mania for imposing conformity, which possessed the Chinese at the same time as they acquired new ideas and overwhelming power, gave little hope that anything so obstinately 'anachronistic' as the Tibetan Government and religion could share in that Brave New World."

When Prime Minister Nehru accepted Chinese suzerainty over Tibet as a legacy from the British, and even when he gave his

consent to the Sino-Tibetan Agreement he never acknowledged that Tibet was a part of China or that the Tibetans formed the same nation as the Chinese; and, in fact, he tried to maintain, by insisting on Tibetan autonomy, the Tibetan personality as a separate nation. All through the years 1951-59, he used his influence with the Chinese to let the Tibetans live their own lives, untrammelled by too much of communism or materialism, and to a considerable extent he succeeded in halting the process of assimilation. But the Chinese had other ideas. They not only wanted Tibet but a large part of NEFA and Assam and all smaller territories located between India and Tibet, ultimately to get an access to the Bay of Bengal through East Pakistan. But this aim could not be achieved if Tibet remained a Trojan Horse in their territory. So as soon as they found that they were strong enough to exert their will, they showed their true colours and did not any longer bother about the means they adopted to achieve the end of destroying Tibet as a nation altogether, and the means which they adopted was most cruel and abominable.

Therefore, the time has come for not only India but all countries of the world to have a new look at Tibet and its status *vis-a-vis* China. Suzerainty of one people over another is no longer valid in international relations. No doubt, Tibet, though very big in area, has a small population compared with China and India, its two neighbours, but there are many smaller countries, both in area and in population, in Asia, Africa and in Latin and Central America which are independent and which are represented in the United Nations. Actually, on the basis of its area, Tibet is one of the larger countries of the world and even on the basis of its population it is fairly high up the ladder. On this question of rethinking about Tibet's status, India has to take the lead. She knows more about Tibet than any other country does, and has more affinities—religious, cultural and linguistic—with that country than any other country has. Even politically she has more vital interest in Tibet than any other country. From the point of view of her own security, Tibet's independent status is indispensable. So India must take up the cudgels on behalf of Tibet. The time also is opportune when even Russia and the East European

countries have realised that China's treatment of her national minorities is nothing short of a brutal attempt to eliminate them as separate racial groups with their own culture, religion and language, and to forcibly assimilate them in the Han race. This is not the way the Kazaks, the Uzbeks or the Tazdiks have been treated in Russia. Even the Red Indians and the Eskimos have a right to live their own lives, but the more numerous and highly cultured Tibetans have not for no other fault than that they are China's neighbours.

The recognition of Tibet as an independent country is justifiable from every angle from which it is examined. Its status as an independent country is even now legally quite tenable and morally there can be no doubt about it. The Tibetans can, within their own resources, maintain a viable existence as an independent country. It is a land-locked country no doubt but there are many other land-locked countries in Asia, e.g. Mongolia, Afghanistan, Nepal, etc; in Europe, e.g. Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Switzerland, etc; in Africa and South America. Independent Tibet can also contribute greatly to the world's store-house of philosophy and culture and help in promoting world peace.

The first step in this direction would be the recognition of the Dalai Lama as the head of the Tibetan Government. In fact, the Dalai Lama has claimed that wherever he and his Kashag stay, the Tibetan Government also exists there. India's lead in this matter, if it is taken after proper diplomatic preparation, will be taken up by many countries of Asia, e.g. Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, and many of the countries of Africa and Latin America and even by such big and powerful countries as Russia and the USA.

Apart from the moral and humanitarian grounds which make it incumbent on India not only to take the lead in the restoration of human rights in Tibet and work towards it through the United Nations, it is also important from the point of view of India's national security that Tibet must be restored to its status of independence and the Tibetan individuality as a separate nation must be protected. In 1950, when the Government of India agreed to accept Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, it was on the explicit

understanding and hope that the Chinese would respect the centuries-old Tibetan autonomy, which was independence in substance. But this hope has been shattered. Tibet is now worse than a colony and even Tibetan existence as a cultured people is being rapidly eroded by force and terror. With the disappearance of Tibetan autonomy and the Chinese armies in strength poised on Indian frontiers, the threat to those frontiers has increased immensely and will continue in the future. As some Members of Parliament have recommended, the time has come when India should revise its policy in regard to Tibet in the United Nations.

Ginsburg in his study on "Communist China and Tibet" has said that even in terms of geopolitics, it can be held that "he who holds Tibet dominates the Himalayan piedmont; he who dominates the Himalayan piedmont threatens the Indian sub-continent; and he who threatens the Indian sub-continent may well have all of South-East Asia within his reach, and, with it, all of Asia".

Pandit Nehru held the same views. In his article on "Changing India" in the *Foreign Affairs Magazine*, April, 1963, talking about the unprovoked and treacherous Chinese aggression on Indian soil the previous winter and the pressure that was being applied on India by some to agree to the Chinese peace terms, he said:

> "First it would be wrong and inexpedient and also repugnant to every sentiment of national honour and self-respect to acquiesce in aggression as established as it is in this case. We must, therefore, insist that the aggression should be undone to our satisfaction before normal relations can be restored. Secondly, despite our friendliness, Chinese behaviour towards us has shown such utter disregard of ordinary canons of international behaviour that it has severely shaken our confidence in her good faith. We cannot, on the available evidence, look upon her as other than a country with profoundly inimical intentions towards our independence and institutions. Thirdly, the Himalayan barrier has proved to be vulnerable. If it is breached, the way to the Indian plains and the ocean will be exposed and the threat to India would then likewise be

a threat to other countries of South and South-East Asia. India's determination to resist aggression and retain her territorial integrity is, therefore, a vital factor in the safeguarding of peace and stability throughout this whole area."

For nearly a century the British maintained the security of India from the north by supporting the neutrality of an autonomous Tibetan State. If the British acknowledged a tenuous form of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, it was entirely for the purpose of thwarting a bigger danger from Czarist Russia than what weak China could pose to the Indian frontiers at that time. With a neutral Tibet on independent treaty relations with the British and British outposts thrust deep into the Tibetan plateau, the northern frontiers of India remained dead frontiers, completely insulated from any danger from foreign aggression. With the British in a predominantly strong position in Tibet, other Himalayan Kingdoms or States like Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, etc. continued to remain firmly within the British sphere of influence. Not only the British power in Tibet protected the independent existence of these territories but they in turn provided an effective barrier against the predatory Chinese and kept them away from the heartland of British India. This balance of power has now been upset. The struggle no longer is in Tibet but has been pushed forward to the Himalayas, that is to India's doorsteps and at many places within Indian territory.

Ginsburg in his study mentioned above has pointed out, "The Tibetan plateau can no longer be viewed as a neutral glacis, a sort of political no-man's-land insulating British India from China's millions, a region where the predatory moves of the Chinese were effectively stymied, both by natural obstacles and British diplomatic manoeuvres and thus China was kept at a safe distance from India. Tibet now represents an advance base of Chinese penetration into South-East Asia and a forepost of Chinese military power in that continent's strategic heartland. The border states, which once served as convenient *places d'armes* for British expeditions to Lhasa, have in turn become the area in

which the portentous struggle between Peking and New Delhi for influence and control and for the possession of the vital Himalayan passes is now being decided. Long safe behind the British front lines (then drawn deep in Tibet), Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Ladakh have now been projected into the very centre of battle for political domination, but Tibet has receded into the background, a rear-guard zone no longer an active prize in the contest for local supremacy between India and China."

Ginsburg has further pointed out that "China had always claimed rights in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim on grounds of traditional ethnic, cultural and religious affinity between the populations of these lands and China's Tibetan region, and the chief aim of Peking's current manipulations in this region seemed to be to detach these territories from India and integrate them into the Chinese orbit by any means short of war, if possible. Though the aim was there from the beginning of Communist invasion of Tibet, its realisation had to be postponed for lack of effective means. For this it was necessary to bring Chinese communication system right up to the Himalayan passes and traverse the region by trunk lines and also completely subjugate Tibet and effectively obliterate all traces of Tibetan autonomy. This has since been achieved. The result has been that several areas which are within India's jurisdiction or under India's protection are now more accessible to the Chinese forces stationed in Tibet than to India's own troops. Moreover, the Chinese possess an overwhelming military preponderance in Tibet. When to this military preponderance the population superiority is added, the threat of Chinese domination over the Indian frontier regions assumes even a bigger reality. Mao has openly stated that he wants ten million people to be settled in Tibet within a foreseeable future. Should this plan be fulfilled, a population many times greater than the one that traditionally occupied the plateau will be facing the relatively empty and inviting areas across the Indo-Tibetan frontier. And populations, like cold air, tend to move from high pressure to lower pressure areas". Unless drastic steps are taken by India without any further delay, the outlook for a successful containment of China even at the Indo-Tibetan border is rather

dim and the result of any large-scale Chinese occupation of the northern territories of India would have severe repercussions in Asia and would be fatal for the free world's survival in this continent.

Therefore, for the security of India as well as for safeguarding the free institutions in the rest of Asia from China, the latter's containment on the northern slopes of the Himalayas is absolutely essential; but this cannot be done by protecting the foothills in India or even the southern slopes. The relative geographical position of the two countries is such that any army in position in Tibet has immense superiority and tactical advantages over an army struggling in the rain-soaked, deeply cut and continually ascending terrain south of the Himalayan range. With the bulk of Indian troops generally located far away from the Himalayan passes—and there is no other place where they could be except at one or two points like Nathula or Jellapla, these passes are no longer commanded by the Indians but are at the mercy of the Chinese. We may be able to stop them ten, twenty, thirty or forty miles south of the passes but we cannot stop them at the passes themselves. This is possible only if we hold positions north of the passes and this brings into relief the great importance of Tibetan independence to India's national security. Actually, India's outposts, not exactly in the military sense but in the sense of military influence, should be in Chamdo, Nagchuka and Gormo and not at Nathula, Jellapla or Thagla, and this can be achieved only by restoring to Tibet her status of an independent country, a status which is her birth-right as constituting the homeland of an ancient and independent nation of highly developed culture.

With an independent Tibet separating China from India, the other Himalayan States like Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, etc. will fit into their proper positions as independent or semi-independent countries or units with friendly and defence ties with India. The population of NEFA will not be disturbed any longer and there will be a much better prospect of integrating this population in India's political and social stream while maintaining its cultural identity. With this development, the idea which China has mooted of a Himalayan country consisting of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, NEFA

and other northern regions of India would die its natural death. Even Pakistan, which is now riding the Chinese band-wagon, will see more sense and will be more responsive to a no-war declaration and will like to live in peace with her neighbour. India herself will be saved from the crushing military burden which she has to bear to meet the twin threat from west and north and this burden will go on increasing in future. She would be able to deploy more resources for fruitful purposes in the field of economic reconstruction. It is Mongolian independence which has made a large stretch of the Russian frontier immune from any Chinese threats, and it will be Tibetan independence which alone can make India's northern frontiers immune from a threat from the same direction. Therefore, both from the point of view of moral and humanitarian grounds as well as from the point of view of India's own national security and interest, India must strive, with the cooperation of all like-minded nations, to restore Tibet to its independent status. Many Members of Parliament pointed out that "The UN is pledged to liberate colonies and does not countenance the rights of the one nation to rule over another. Our representatives at the next session of the UN Assembly should be instructed to sound opinion among member States and try to have the Tibetan question referred to the committee against colonial occupation."

The present is not an unsuitable time for making such a move. China has broken her military alliance with Russia and has taken up arms against that country. China's claim to support the national liberation of all peoples of Asia and Africa does no longer appeal to them because of the treatment she has meted out to the peaceful Tibetans and also the attempts she has made to subvert the existing governments in some of these countries. They have also seen the power struggle which has been raging in China for the last few years, professedly on the ground of ideology but really for the mundane reason of seizing power when Mao Tse-tung fades away. In course of this struggle, even such well-known leaders like Liu Shao-chi, Teng Hsiang, Peng Chen, who had helped to develop Chinese Communism from its very inception and had built up the Chinese Army and had liberated China, have

been denigrated as feudalists, traitors, spies or scabs and openly humiliated on the streets of Peking. All countries have been amazed to see to what abysmal depths the great Chinese culture has been dragged in the name of cultural revolution. Mao may show some flickers of his engimatic smile and though nations may like to open up trade and other relations with China, and the latter may impress other nations with her great military power, the credibility gap cannot be bridged. The smile may quickly turn into a snarl, as happened in the case of India. No country had done so much for China in the international forum all through the 'fifties as India had done; and yet China had no compunction in betraying India when she found that the latter came in her way of acquiring hegemony in Asia.

There are, however, many inherent dangers in making such a move. Any change from the present position of accepting Chinese colonialism in Tibet as a *fait accompli* would bring about violent reactions in China. Such an action will undoubtedly make China extremely hostile and she will try to take reprisals against India in various ways. We may examine in what ways China can try to harm India and whether she is not already doing all that is possible for her in that direction.

China could react in several ways: firstly, by inciting, training and arming the tribal population in India's frontier regions; secondly, by fostering armed revolutionary movements inside the country; thirdly, by carrying on hostile propaganda against India; fourthly, by arming and inciting countries hostile to India and fifthly, by an outright act of aggression.

So far as the first alternative is concerned, everyone knows that China has incited, trained and armed the Nagas, the Mizos and other tribals and has even opened training centres for them in East Pakistan. In arming the Nagas, the Mizos and other tribals, China has already committed an act of war against India, whilst India has remained completely peaceful since 1962. Such an action on China's part has tied down a fair quantum of Indian troops and police and kept these territories in a state of disorder. China cannot do any more in these areas and the Indian administration is capable of meeting

the worst forms of disorder that China may encourage.

If the NEFA population has remained undisturbed, it is not because China has not tried her best to win that population over but because she has so far failed to do so in spite of her best efforts. This is because since 1962, the introduction of people's resistance movement in these tribal areas, motivating them and training them even in the use of arms against possible Chinese incursions has brought this population much closer to the mainstream of India's social order. Similar is the position in all the other frontier areas having a border with Tibet and China has not been able to make any dent on them.

China has never given up her aim to bring about a revolutionary movement in India, which would, of course, be aimed at overthrowing the present government elected according to the wishes of the people. China has lent the fullest political support to the so-called Naxalbari movement in various parts of the country, which aims at a violent revolution to seize power, and it is believed that she has been passing on arms to the protagonists of this movement both through East Pakistan and through contact points on the border of Nagaland. This is another act of war which is being conducted against India.

Even in the heyday of India-China friendship, China maintained an ambiguous attitude about India's position in Jammu and Kashmir. It is known that during the Bandung Conference, when Pandit Nehru had gone out of his way to chaperon Chou En-lai and make China acceptable to the Afro-Asian nations by disarming their suspicions, Chou En-lai had, behind the back of Pandit Nehru, contacted the Pakistani Prime Minister and assured him that China did not consider Pakistan's participation in the SEATO Pact to be directed against her and would not allow that to come in the way of establishing friendly relations between the two countries. In doing this, China was looking ahead to the possibility of deterioration of her relations with India when she would be able to utilise Pakistan's avowed hostility to India for opening a second front against this country. In furtherance of the same policy, China supported the so-called national liberation movement in Kashmir and, even during the large-scale

infiltration of Pakistanis into Kashmir in 1965, China characterised this as a rebellion by the people in furtherance of their liberation movement.

China has openly sided with Pakistan, has armed that country and had tried to divert Indian troops in 1965 during the Pakistani war by creating tension and threatening to attack the northern border. Bhutto had declared that the Chinese would attack India if the latter threatened East Pakistan. Even the Tashkent Declaration between India and Pakistan at Russian instance has been ridiculed by China. Thus, whilst all other nations of the world are anxious to restore good relations between India and Pakistan, China alone is bent on seeing that this does not happen. In league with Pakistan, she has annexed several hundred square miles of Indian territory north of Gilgit and has now opened up direct road link between Sinkiang and Pakistan.

China has continued to carry on hostile propaganda against India and has alleged that the Indian reactionaries have ganged up with the American imperialists and the Russian revisionists to encircle China, though the world knows that India has done nothing of this kind but she has friendly relations with both the USA and the USSR as she has with the majority of the countries of the United Nations. China has done her best to subvert India's position in Nepal, and has succeeded up to a point, but beyond that she would not succeed there. Pakistan remains her only firm ally. She may supply more arms if she likes. She can incite the Pakistanis to attack India once again; but the Pakistanis also know what is awaiting them in case they indulge in such a misadventure again.

So China during the period since 1962 has not only done further acts of war against India by inciting, training and arming the tribals but has also tried to incite an armed rebellion inside the country and has consistently carried on hostile propaganda against India in other countries and has tried to arm and incite Pakistan against India. Therefore, she has already taken all steps short of committing outright aggression against India, but has so far failed to draw any direct benefit from it.

China is, of course, in a position to commit aggression against

India again, but with the preparations that have been made on the Indian side, such aggression can be contained in the hills and even retaliatory measures can be carried into the Chinese-held territory. Even if China, by a sudden thrust, were to occupy a considerable area anywhere along the northern frontiers of India, she would not find it comfortable to sit on her acquisition long because of the counter-attack that will be mounted on her, both from outside the territory she occupies as well as from inside it and there is every possibility of a rebellion breaking out in Tibet itself.

Pandit Nehru had pointed out after the first Chinese aggression in 1959 and later in 1962 that the northern frontier, which had been a dead frontier for centuries, had suddenly become a live frontier and, whether China and India remained friends or enemies, there was no prospect of that frontier reverting back to a dead frontier and India would always in future have to take proper protective measures to guard that frontier. He had also visualised that a war between India and China would not end soon and might last as many as fifty or hundred years. He had held that it would be impossible for the Chinese to penetrate through the Himalayas and emerge in force in the Indian plains and defeat the Indian Army there just as it would be impossible for the Indian army to penetrate through Tibet and defeat the Chinese Army in China. The only way the frontier could be converted to a dead frontier would be by restoring Tibet to an independent status.

There is no doubt that the reaction in China to the steps suggested for securing the restoration of human rights in Tibet would be violent and she would try to do the worst possible harm to India. But, should India refrain from doing the right thing because of what China might think and because of the actions which China might take in retaliation? Every policy which India initiates and every step she takes in its implementation must be in the national interest of the country. In this case the national interest demands that independence must be restored to Tibet, and that is the only way any threat to India's security from the north can be permanently eliminated. We have explored all the

ways by which China can create trouble but the risks involved are minimal and amount to no more than what she is already doing. And finally even a military aggression by China will no longer be an one-sided affair. It can be contained and China paid back in her own coin. Our Defence Minister has asserted this in Parliament.

Another consideration is what would be the reaction to India's new China policy in other countries. It can be well understood that the smaller countries on China's periphery would not like to commit themselves one way or the other for fear of Chinese aggression. The only countries which will oppose such a move would be Pakistan and an absolutely pro-Chinese country like Albania. But these two countries have always been hostile to India and their hostility would be nothing new. But the reaction in the non-Communist world generally would be favourable. India's position as the champion of all the suppressed people throughout the world will be restored and any move on her part to get Tibetan rights recognised in spite of the dangers that confront her would attract the admiration and the respect of the entire world. Even in that part of the Communist world, which is pro-Russia, the reaction is likely to be favourable and the move likely to be supported, because even Russia has now spoken approvingly of the national liberation movements in Tibet and in other minority areas in China and has accused China of genocide in respect of her minorities. The Tashkent Radio and official Soviet newspapers like *Pravda* and *Izvestia* have repeatedly drawn attention of the world to the national liberation movements that are going on in Tibet, Sinkiang and other minority areas as a reaction against the avowed Chinese objective of assimilating these people in the Han race by methods of brutal repression and genocide. Such reports repeat all the horrors mentioned earlier which the Chinese have perpetrated and are still perpetrating in Tibet and stress the fact that thousands of Tibetans are rotting in jails without any trial and thousands are counting their days in labour camps. By supporting the cause of Tibetan independence in the forum of the United Nations and by exhibiting her readiness to face Chinese reprisals, India can regain her influence in

international affairs, an influence which she lost to China because she was not in a position to protect Tibet due to her own military weakness.

The question then may be asked whether India should close all doors of a dialogue with China or keep the door open. Referring to China, Pandit Nehru once said that he would talk to anybody and at any place. That did not mean that he was going to give in to China. In international politics the doors of negotiations are never closed. But two parties are required to conduct a dialogue; it cannot be done by only one. No statesman of the world did so much to make China acceptable to the free world in the 'fifties as Pandit Nehru did. He unilaterally renounced all the rights that India had inherited from the British in Tibet and even induced Nepal to do so. He made China acceptable to all the Asian and African Powers in the Bandung Conference. Year after year India took the lead in the United Nations to secure a place for China in that august Assembly. These are all historical facts. But China conveniently forgot all that India had done for her and did not shrink from stabbing Pandit Nehru in the back, and tried her best to denigrate his position internationally. So when we open a dialogue, it is necessary to keep these historical facts in perspective.

Then what is the dialogue going to be about? Obviously about the settlement of the dispute regarding the frontier. Let us examine this point a little more closely. After the Chinese aggression of 1962 and withdrawal from NEFA and not North-East Ladakh, China made certain proposals for resuming negotiations, which were not acceptable to India because they would give China rights over certain territories which she had acquired by an act of aggression. India, on the other hand, suggested the withdrawal to the lines held by each prior to September 8, 1962, but this the Chinese would not agree to do because then they would have to give up the territory which they had acquired by force in North-East Ladakh. Then came the Colombo Proposals, which took a middle position between these two stands. China at first said she would give a positive response, no doubt expecting that India would not accept the proposals. But when India signified

her acceptance, China's positive response became negative and China again insisted on the acceptance of her own proposals as the basis for the talks. Repeated efforts by the Colombo Powers failed to influence China to take a more positive attitude. In 1963, Pandit Nehru even went so far as to say that, though according to the Colombo Proposals India had the right to open civilian posts in the areas to be vacated by China, he was prepared to forego this right, if this stood in the way of the Chinese accepting the proposals. So an advance was made to open the dialogue in a circumstance more favourable to China than had been conceded under the Colombo Proposals. But still there was no response. This is a point which has been emphasised by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi even as late as September, 1969, when, in answering a question regarding a dialogue with China, she said that the door for a dialogue with China was always open so far as India was concerned but she saw no change in China's attitude so far.

The conditions on which China could condescend to talk with India were spelled out by Lin Piao, the Defence Minister and the virtual Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese Army and Mao Tse-tung's heir apparent, in his report to the 9th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. This is what Lin Piao said: "The Chinese Government held repeated negotiations with the Indian Government on the Sino-Indian boundary question. As the reactionary Indian Government had taken over the British imperialist policy of aggression, it insisted that we recognise the illegal McMahon Line which even the reactionary governments of different periods in old China had not recognised, and, moreover, it valiantly attempted to further occupy the Aksai Chin area which has always been under Chinese jurisdiction, thereby disrupting Sino-Indian boundary negotiations". The meaning of this passage is quite clear. Aksai Chin belonged to China and she had always been in occupation of Akasi Chin. It was India which had committed aggression in Aksai Chin thus disrupting the Sino-Indian boundary negotiations. In other words, so far as North-East Ladakh under Chinese illegal occupation is concerned, there could be no talks at all. If this question is raised, the discussions

cannot take place. On the other hand, China does not recognise the McMahon Line and is prepared to discuss where the Sino-Indian boundary would be along this part of the frontier. It is, therefore, a case of heads I win and tails you lose. China would not talk about the area which she has occupied and, therefore, the dialogue can be only about the area which is under India's occupation.

In denouncing India's alleged attempt to occupy Aksai Chin, Lin Piao has conveniently forgotten to mention that it was not Aksai Chin only that the Chinese had occupied but five other areas, e.g. Soda Plains, Lingzi Tang, a part of the Chang Chenmo valley, a part of Depsang Plains and the pastures east and north of Lanak La and Dumjor La, the total area of all these being at least three times that of Aksai Chin. Unfortunately, many Indian writers also have referred to this dispute in North-East Ladakh as a dispute over Aksai Chin alone. Even if it is conceded for the sake of argument that China has some tenuous claim over Aksai Chin that does not automatically give her any right over the other areas mentioned above. Pandit Nehru was probably willing to negotiate with regard to Aksai Chin but the Chinese had arbitrarily occupied large areas which traditionally had always been under the control of the Jammu and Kashmir Government. These areas formed an integral part of the Indus river basin. The access to Aksai Chin from Sinkiang lies through Soda Plains and therefore the trespass into Aksai Chin and Soda Plains had taken place simultaneously. The Chinese, however, did not come to Lingzi Tang and Chang Chenmo river valley before the summer of 1959. An Indian patrol had gone right up to Lanak La across the Chang Chenmo river valley in June, 1959, but had found no Chinese on this access till then. The Chinese did not come into Depsang Plains till October, 1960, nor did they occupy the pastures between the Lanak La and Dumjor La before 1961. Lin Piao deliberately confuses the issue by including all these areas under Aksai Chin. The fight with the Indian troops took place in Depsang Plains and Galwan river valley. Aksai Chin is far to the east of both these places. After the Chinese occupation of Aksai Chin, the Indian troops were not in a position to re-occupy it nor did they ever

make any attempt to do so. They were only trying to stop further Chinese intrusion into the western ends of Depsang Plains and Chang Chenmo river valley and were nowhere near Aksai Chin.

In the same speech Lin Piao referred to the growing armed struggle of the people in India among other countries and after remarking that the truth that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" was being grasped by ever broader masses of the oppressed people, pledged firm Chinese support to the revolutionary struggles of people of India and other countries. The import of this statement is also clear. Whether India settles her border dispute or not, the present democratic form of Government in India chosen by a free people is not acceptable to China and she would continue to support armed revolutionary struggles to overthrow that Government.

And what do we lose by not carrying on the negotiations? As we have pointed out in the previous chapter, excepting a few square miles of territory in Longju and Thagla, we hold the entire territory which we claim to be part of India throughout the entire northern frontier in NEFA, in Uttar Pradesh, in Himachal Pradesh and also in South and South-East Ladakh. It is only in North-East Ladakh that China has occupied nearly 12,000 miles of uninhabited barren territory, which militarily India has no prospect of recovering in the foreseeable future and about which China is not prepared to talk. Therefore, the negotiations, if resumed with China, can end in only one result if they are to be successful, that is India conceding considerably more territory to China in NEFA, in Uttar Pradesh, in Himachal Pradesh and in South-East Ladakh and also agreeing to turn out the Dalai Lama from India. China magnanimously for the time being, and for the time being only, would leave the rest of the territory under India's control and use this as a propaganda to restore her an image in the Afro-Asian world.

But would this abject surrender on the part of India make India effectively secure against China? Not at all. China would still encourage the armed rebellion of the Naxalbari groups within India. Once India lowers her guard, China would foster armed struggle in the tribal areas on the slogan of their separation from

India with the purpose of ultimately annexing them to her empire. She will continue her armed assistance to Pakistan directed against India. She will continue to support the "national liberation movement" of the Kashmiris and she will continue to support the so-called national liberation movements of all the tribal population of India. India will never be able to relax her guard on this frontier and, therefore, there is no chance of India reducing her military preparations or military expenditure required for maintaining those preparations. Of course, the cost-effectiveness of such military preparations can be improved and more inexpensive measures better suited to this particular terrain could be taken. But the preparations must continue all through the foreseeable future. If India reduces her guard on this frontier, China will again create the same situation as she did in 1959 to 1962 and India will again be caught unprepared. The only way this guard can be reduced is by restoring Tibet to its independent position.

One may argue that all this talk of restoring Tibet to an independent status is now academic and unrealistic. It is, of course, a safe policy to allow the massacre of a small nation by a mighty neighbour and forget about it, but when that small country happens to be on one's border, the extinction of which brings the mighty power to the country's door-step, the position becomes different and one cannot shut one's eyes and keep quiet. It is for this reason that Russia has set up countries along her border in Europe which are ideologically allied to Russia and friendly to her. It is for this reason that China is trying to extend her influence in South-East Asia and helping the war to continue there, of course at the expense of Indo-Chinese lives. China does not want either the USSR or the USA to come there. The Chinese aims in South-East Asia are clear and unless the non-Communist Asian states join together, she will inexorably put all non-Communist Governments in this area out of existence and make herself supreme in that region. Twenty years have passed since the Communist Government took over power in China and the policy has been followed relentlessly, though, in the mean time, China has accepted many compromises and even has been a signatory to the Geneva Pact supporting the neutrality of the

countries in Indo-China. But her aim has not changed.

The point which must be realised is that India's security is seriously threatened by the Chinese presence on the Himalayan frontier. As Pandit Nehru had pointed out the Chinese had always been an aggressive nation. Now the Communists have brought tremendous military power to that country. Unless stopped north of the Himalayas, the Chinese would eventually be all over South-East Asia and even West Pakistan, would thrust deep into India's northern regions which will leave the plains of India at their mercy. This may not be achieved for a decade or two yet, but the Chinese policy is quite clear and she will follow it single-mindedly. She will make pacts with any monarchy and dictatorship, knowing fully well that when the time comes, she can dish them and establish her own political hegemony.

To guarantee effectively the security of the Himalayas, it is essential to restore Tibetan independence. This is the aim to which India's foreign policy should be directed and should remain ever present in the minds of the Indian negotiators in every talk that is held with China or the countries allied to her or even in the United Nations. There must be continuity in that aim. What we suffered from in the past was that, except Pandit Nehru, few in the administration really tried to understand the real long-term aims of the Chinese. They generally took Chinese professions at their face value and forgot to take adequate steps to safeguard India's interests and security. When they woke up to the realisation that these smiles were meant to lull their suspicions, it was too late. Therefore, just as nonalignment has been a most realistic policy for India for the last twenty years and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future, the policy of ultimately restoring Tibet to an independent status must also remain a permanent feature of India's foreign policy. This does not mean that we should not restore normal relations with China. We should, as and when the opportunity comes; and the government will no doubt decide it in proper time without being hustled by the pro-China lobby. We should also enter into all talks and discussions but should not any longer be deluded by Mao's or anybody else's smiles. It is also not suggested that we march our army against

China to liberate Tibet. Indian intervention may be necessary in the long run when the Tibetans rise in revolt; but the time has not yet come. We have to wait for the convulsions that are bound to take place in China when Mao fades away. In the meantime every diplomatic step should be taken and carried on skilfully with this aim in view. Also in no foreseeable future the preparations in India should be allowed to slacken. The spirit of resistance of the frontier people so assiduously built up must not be allowed to wither due to any outward profession of friendship by China. What is required is a new posture, a new line of thinking and a long-range policy regarding India's relations with Tibet and China; and that policy should have Tibetan independence as its core.

There is no need to despair because of the inevitable time-lag between the destruction of Tibetan independence and its eventual restoration. Many other countries had also been conquered and colonised by invaders and had remained under foreign control for centuries before regaining their independence. India herself is a case in point. China may continue to hold Tibet under her heels for another decade or two, but the world consciousness must be roused ultimately to force China to withdraw from Tibet and let the Tibetans live their own lives without interference by others. This population does not threaten any body and has much to contribute to world's philosophy. It may be the vehicle for carrying Buddha's message of peace and amity among the people of all countries of the world. India must see that the Tibetan voice is not muted for ever and the Tibetans are not snuffed out of existence by the Chinese.

In the end, therefore, one cannot but come to the conclusion that there is nothing to be lost, but, on the other hand, there is much to be gained by making a change in India's foreign policy so far as Tibet is concerned and adopting a policy which will be morally and internationally the right one in conformity with India's traditional opposition to anti-colonialism and her policy of fighting for suppressed people's rights throughout the world. That way not only India's honour can be redeemed but, if carried to a successful conclusion, can the security of the northern frontiers be permanently guaranteed.

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